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ILLUSTRATED
ENGLISH HISTORY
OLD STORIES
FROM BRITISH HISTORY



BY
F. YORK POWELL, M.A.

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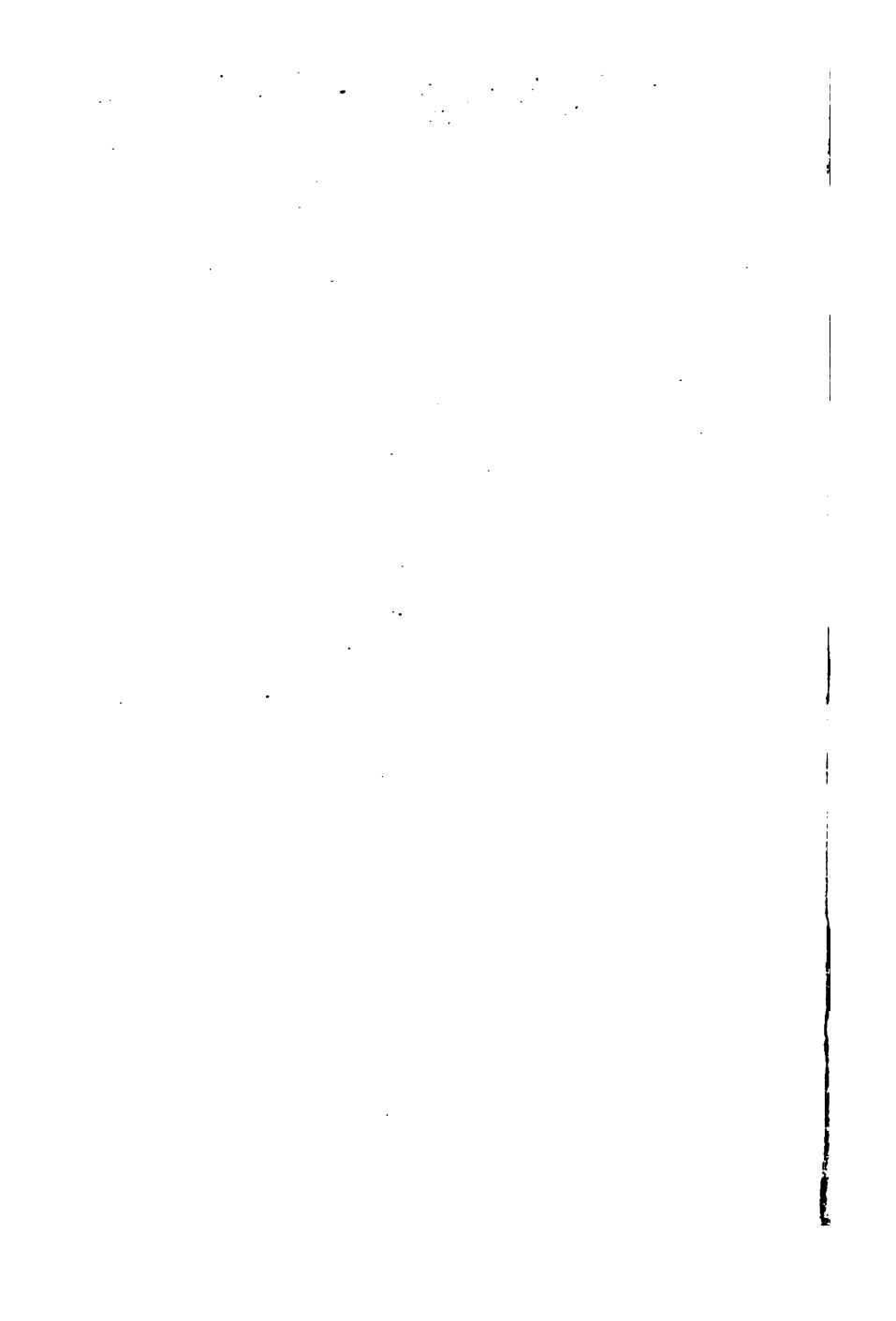
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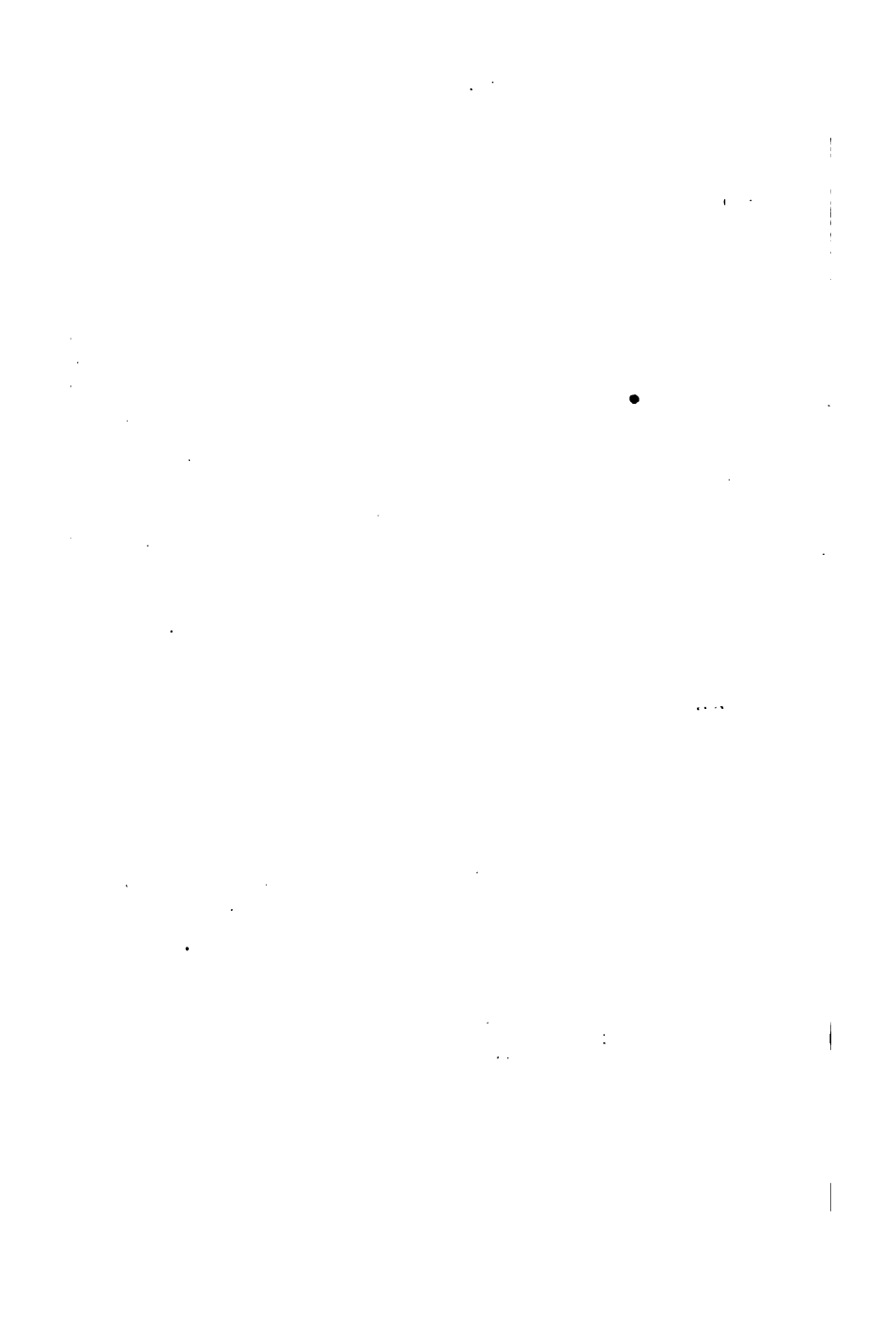
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OLD STORIES
FROM
BRITISH HISTORY

BY

F. YORK POWELL, M.A.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD*

'Remember the days of old'

'Not to know what has happened before one's own
days is to remain a child for ever'

REVISED AND ENLARGED

MASSACHUSETTS

State Normal School

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PREFACE.

THESE TALES, several of which have not been Englished before, are drawn from original sources. The writer has chosen such stories as he thought would amuse and please his readers, and give them at the same time some knowledge of the lives and thoughts of their forefathers. To this end he has not written solely of great folk—kings and queens and generals—but also of plain people and children, aye, and birds and beasts too. Moreover, this wider range of subject best befits a Reader, from the greater store of simple terms which must needs be used. Long phrases and out-of-the-way words have been carefully eschewed; and such plain, homely English as has been

kept to throughout will not be beyond the reach of those whom the writer hopes will be his most numerous, though not his only readers—the children of this country and the Greater Britain over seas.

This, the third, edition has been revised throughout, the longer paragraphs have been broken up into shorter pieces, new stories have been added and fresh pictures, in the wish to make the little book more useful and pleasant to those that use it.

This book now contains 57 lessons and over 120 pages of reading matter, in accordance with the instructions to Her Majesty's inspectors.

CH. CH. OXFORD, 1885.

OLD STORIES

FROM

BRITISH HISTORY.

LESSON 1.

The English People in Old Times.—Nearly fifteen hundred years ago the English people first came to Britain, and took part of it from the Welsh, and lived in it, and called it England after their own name. The Welsh were Christians, as the Romans had taught them to be.

But for some time after the English came here they were heathens, like some of the black people you read about, who live in foreign lands beyond the sea. And, like them, they worshipped many gods, and believed many strange stories about them.

These stories are such as we should now call fairy tales, and tell to children to amuse

them ; but in those days even wise, grown-up people thought they were true. For you must not think that the English, at the time we are talking of, were foolish in other ways because of their strange beliefs.

They were not wise enough to learn from their enemies, the Welsh, it is true. But there were good sailors and brave soldiers, hard-working farmers and skilful smiths and carpenters, among them. And they could take care of themselves, and hold their own whether at work or play.

Their Guesses at the Truth.—But they had no books, so they did not know much that wise men in other lands had already found out. And they had never set their own minds to work to find out the truth about many of the wonderful things that go on in the world.

They were quite content, when they did not understand a thing, to guess at a reason for it, and they never took much care to see whether their guess was right or wrong. And so they went on doing their daily work and earning their daily bread for many a long year, without knowing much that in our time nearly every little child learns at school.

There is only room here to tell you a few

of the beliefs that our forefathers held before they became Christians, and before they learnt what was written in the wise books of learned men of other nations.

The Sun.—They could hardly help thinking about the sun, which makes the day, and gives the light by which we see. But their thoughts about it seem strange enough to us, though it is not very long ago that we have really found out something about the sun, and what it is made of.

They used to think then that the sun was a fair goddess, who was drawn across the sky every day in a chariot by two horses called Early and Swift. So bright and glowing was she, that the other gods put a large round shield in front of her, for fear her burning rays should make the seas boil and the rocks melt. And that, they said, is why the sun looks round and bright like a polished shield; for you cannot see the face of the goddess herself.

Eng'-lish	Brit'-ain	Welsh	Eng'-land
heath'-ens	for'-eign	wor'-ship-ped	be-lieve'-d
stor'-ies	fai'-ry	a-muse'	be-liefs'
en'-e-mies	sold'-iers	al-read'-y	fore'-fath-ers
na'-tions	god'-dess	Christ'-ian	shield

LESSON 2.

An Eclipse of the Sun.—You have heard of an *eclipse of the sun*. It is an astonishing thing to see, and likely to frighten anyone who does not know the real cause of it. In



ECLIPSE OF THE SUN.

the middle of the day the clear face of the sun is blackened bit by bit.

Sometimes for a moment or two it is quite dark like night, and the fowls and singing-birds go to roost, and the owls, and bats, and beasts of the night come out, thinking that the day is over. We know that this is caused by the

moon passing in front of the sun and hiding it from us. But Englishmen in those old days did not know how this sudden darkness came about, and they made an odd guess at the reason for it.

Why Folks made a Noise during an Eclipse.—They said that there was a huge beast like a wolf always rushing through the sky after the sun to try and swallow it; and that sometimes this wolf would catch the sun in his great black jaws, so that it was lost to sight for awhile. And so, when an eclipse happened, they were dreadfully afraid that the beast would swallow the sun altogether, and that the world would be left in darkness.

Then everybody would rush out into the air, and shout and whoop. The good wives beat their brass pans with the wooden spoons. The men clashed their spears and shields together, or hammered away on the smith's anvil. The very children kept up a rattle with sticks and stones—all to try and frighten the beast, and make him open his mouth and let the sun go.

This seems funny enough. But there are millions of people alive in China who, whenever an eclipse happens, still do as our forefathers did to save the sun from being swallowed.

6 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

The Moon.—If the old English had such fancies about the sun, you may be sure that they had plenty of odd tales to tell about the moon. They said the full moon was the sun's brother, that drove through the sky of nights as the sun did by day.

The sickle-shaped moon, when it is 'lying on its back,' as we say, they believed to be a



MOON ON ITS BACK.

great silver pail, borne on a pole by a giant and giantess. For they used buckets of that shape in those days—shallower and more rounded at the bottom than our buckets are now. As for the eclipses of the moon, which are caused by the shadow of the earth, they

supposed them to be brought about by a monster, as in the case of the sun.

e-clipse'	wives	fright'-en	black'-en-ed
swal'-low	guess	hap'-pen-ed	dread'-full-y
al-to-geth'-er	whoop	ham'-mer-ed	as-ton'-ish-ing
shields	an'-vils	fore'-fath-ers	gi'-ant-ess
fan'-cies	buck'-et	shal'-low-er	shad'-ow

LESSON 3.

The Stars.—As for the stars, they had much to say about them. They had given names to all the brightest ones, and there was a story to every name. We know only a few of those tales, for most of them have been lost. You shall hear some of them, however, that were written down a long time ago by a clever man, who thought it a pity that these strange old stories should be clean forgotten. For when folks had become Christians they did not believe such tales any more, and so they took no care to keep them in their minds, and only told them round the fire for pastime at Christmastide. And at last there were only a few old men and women left who knew

them, and, when they died, those tales that had not been written down were lost altogether.

What was thought of the Earth.—To understand the stories, you must bear in mind that the heathen English did not know that this earth, we live on, is a huge round ball spinning round the sun. They thought it was a broad flat plain, ringed about by the ocean.

Farther on in this book you will find a map of the earth as they thought it was. Beyond the ocean, to the north, in the dark, cold lands, where there are snow-clad mountains, and frozen rivers, and lofty cliffs of ice, they believed the *giants* lived, big, cruel, stupid beings, who were the foes of gods and men. While in the warm south, above the hills, in a fair, bright land, walled round to keep the giants out, they said the gods dwelt.

The Dwarves.—In the gloomy, sunless valleys of the hills and under the earth, in the caves of the rocks, and deep in mines under ground lurked the dwarves.

These were strange, artful, cunning little beings, who worked in gold, and silver, and copper, and iron, and made fine, sharp sword-blades, and wonderful necklaces, and rings, and bracelets, which folks were sometimes lucky enough to get from them.

A dwarf was seldom seen above ground save after sunset, for if one ray of the sun's light fell upon him he would be turned into



THE DWARVES.

stone on the spot. In many places there are strangely shaped rocks and stones, that look something like men and women in the distance.

10 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

These were believed to be dwarves that had loitered too long, and had been touched by a sunbeam.

clev'-er	writ'-ten	stor'-ies	Christ'-ian
Christ'-mas-tide	o'-cean	far'-ther	lurk'-ed
fro'-zen	gi'-ants	cun'-ning	art'-ful
neck'-lac-es	orace'-lets	dwarves	loi'-ter-ed
dist'-ance	huge	cop'-per	gloom'-y

LESSON 4.

The God Thunder.—The gods and giants were always at war with each other. The god Thunder was the champion of the gods, and killed many of the giants with his hammer, the thunderbolt. After him is named the fourth day of the week, Thunder's Day, which we now call Thursday.

When a storm came on, people thought that the long rolling peal of distant thunder was the rumbling of his car, as he drove through the sky. And when the dazzling lightning flashed across the dark clouds, they said that the god was hurling his mighty hammer at some evil monster. They thought of Thunder as a big, burly, good-natured man, with a long red beard. His car was drawn

by two goats. He had a brisk little servant named Delve, who sometimes went with him in his journeys.

The Bold Giant.—One day, when Thunder came home to supper in the great hall of the gods, he found a huge giant sitting at the table there, eating and drinking and boasting loudly of what he could do, and threatening the gods and goddesses. They did not quite know how to take it, for he was a very big giant and ill to deal with, as he had a head of stone. Besides, they did not like to show a guest to the door. But Thunder bade him begone at once, and off he went grumbling.

The Giant's Challenge.—However, before he turned away, he told Thunder that he could not fight him then, because he had left his great stone club and thick shield at home. 'But,' said he, 'if you will meet me on the borders of Giantland in a month's time, I will punish you for turning me away from the gods' table.' Thunder said that he and his servant Delve would be there at the day set.

When the giant, whose name was Rung-ne, got home and told his fellow-giants that he had offered to fight Thunder, they thought

12 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

he had been very rash, but they wished to do their best to help him. So as none of them had courage enough to stand by him in the



THE GIANTS SLAIN BY THUNDER AND DELVE.

fight, they made a great giant-like figure of clay, which they called 'Muck-calf.' And this they set up on the battle-field, giving

him a shield and club, and putting a mare's heart in his breast to make him brave.

The Giant is Slain.—When the day came, Rung-ne and Muck-calf, looking very fierce and bold, stood waiting for Thunder. By-and-by up comes Delve, Thunder's little servant, a cunning fellow, and calls out to the giant, 'If you hold your shield so high you will soon be killed, for my master's hammer-strokes often come from below.'

Rung-ne thought he would make himself safe beforehand, so he made haste to put his large thick shield on the ground and stood upon it, feeling sure that no thunderbolt could pierce it through.

But at that very minute Thunder appeared in the air, and hurled his lightning hammer full at the giant's bare head. Rung-ne swung up his thick stone club to meet the stroke, but it was of little use. The god's hammer flew with such force that it broke the giant's club in two, and struck Rung-ne dead to the earth.

al'-ways	champ'-i ^{on}	thun'-der-bolt	fourth
Thurs'-day	rumb'-ling	dazz'-ling	light'-ning
hurl'-ed	mon'-ster	min'-ute	jour'-ney
threat'-en-ing	guest	grumb'-ling	cour'-age
fig'-ure	breast	fierce	pierce

LESSON 5.

Thunder's Wound.—So the giant came to an end. As for poor Muck-calf, his heart was not a very brave one after all, and he stood shivering and shaking like a frightened horse, as you see him in the picture, till Delve ran up and killed him.

Yet Thunder did not get off scot-free. One half of the giant's broken club flew over the ocean-stream and fell on the earth, and out of it all the hones in the world have been made. But the other piece flew into Thunder's skull, and there it stayed and could not be got out.

So Thunder went off to a certain wise woman called *Grow*, and begged her to help him. And she fell to singing over his wounded head some magical charm-songs, which she alone knew.

Why you must handle a Hone carefully.—When she had sung two or three verses, Thunder felt that the bit of hone-stone was loosening.

He was glad, and thought he would repay her for her kindness. So he told her how he had saved her husband *Or-wandle*, the hunter,

from the giants, and carried him in a basket from Giantland to earth. 'But,' said he, 'it was so cold that one of his toes which stuck out of the basket was frozen and fell off! However, I have taken care of it, and put it safely in the sky, and your husband will be home again with you in a few hours.'

Grow was so delighted to hear of her husband's safety, and to know that she should soon see him again, that she clean forgot the words of the song she was singing, and was forced to stop before the end. So the bit of hone-stone still remains in Thunder's skull, and it can never be got out. And everyone that has a hone must take care to handle it gently. For if it is thrown about, or carelessly let fall, the other piece that is in Thunder's head gives a sharp wrench which hurts him very much.

The Star-Cluster, Orion.—On a clear night in winter, if you go out of doors and look up at the sky, you will see a group of stars set like those in the cut.

This cluster, which we now call by its Greek name *Or-iōn*, the old English called *Or-wandle*, Grow's husband, and the brightest star of all those that are in it they called *Or-wandle's Toe*. And if you look carefully at

16 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

the cluster you can make out, as it were, the shape of a huge man marked out with stars.

The two bright stars at the top are his hands, the two bright stars below are his feet, the three fine stars in a line are the clasps on his belt, and below them are some smaller



ORION

stars which mark the hilt of his knife or sword and the shape of its sheath. Other small stars mark his club and shield. There

are no stars to mark his eyes, for the story goes that he was blind.

shiv'-er-ing	fright'-en-ed	cert'-ain	loos'-en-ing
mag'-ic-al	vers-es	bask'-et	de-light'-ed
wrench	group	clus'-ter	care'-ful-ly
knife	sword	hand'-le	clasp

Hone : A whet-stone. A long rough stone used by reapers to sharpen their scythes upon.

LESSON 6.

The Dog-stars, the Bull's Eye and the Twins.—Near this wonderful star-cluster you will find two other groups with a bright star in each. These are called the *Big Dog* and the *Little Dog*. For a hunter, like Or-wandle, must of course have his Hounds with him.

Above Or-wandle is a star-cluster called the Bull, with a very bright star in it called the *Bull's Eye*. And it is this Bull that the great Hunter is chasing through the sky. There is a band of cloudy light which you can see stretching across the sky. In the picture here it runs between Or-wandle and the Little Dog. This bright band, which is really made up of thousands of far-off stars, was called by

the Old English, the *Fairies' Path*, or *Watling Street*.

The Romans, thinking that it looked something like a stream of milk, called it the *Milky Way*, and that is the name it most often goes by now. There are two large bright stars lying close together in the sky on the other side of the *Milky Way*, which are now called the *Twins*. You may see them not very far from the star-clusters, which you have just read about.

In old days the English called these two stars the *Giant's Eyes*, and told the following tale of how they came to be in the heavens.

The Giant Eagle.—There was once upon a time a giant named *Daze*, who took the shape of a great Eagle, and flew into the land of men to see what he could pick up.

He found three of the gods sitting under a big tree, lighting a fire of dry wood under a huge kettle. They wanted to cook an ox which they had just killed and flayed, for they had travelled far and were hungry. He alighted on a branch of the tree and watched them, and as he could work magic he cast a spell over the pot, so that the meat should not be cooked till he wished.

The fire burnt up brightly under the pot,

and the wood crackled and glowed with the heat, but the water would not boil, and the meat would not get done. The poor gods began to wonder when they should get their dinner. Then the Eagle called out to them, 'What will you give me if I make your pot boil?' 'A share of the meat,' answered they. With that the water began to bubble in the pot, and the lid to rattle up and down with the steam, and ere long the meat was nicely cooked.

won'-der-ful	chas'-ing	cloud'-y	stretch'-ing
fair'-ies	Ro'-man	fol'-low-ing	eag'-le
flay'-ed	trav'-el-led	hung'-ry	a-light'-ed
re'-al-ly	crack'-led	bub'-ble	hounds

Watling Street: A road made by the Romans from London to Chester in a straight line.

LESSON 7.

Lo-ke is caught by the Giant.—Lo-ke, one of the three gods, took the pot off the chain and lifted the lid. As soon as the lid was off down swooped the Eagle and caught up the four quarters of the ox in his talons. Now this was the best and biggest part of the

20 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

meat, and the hungry gods were left only the head and ribs to pick at.



LO-KE AND THE GIANT.

The greedy bird was just about flying off with his prey, when Lo-ke thought he would try and get part of it back. So he snatched

up a thick pole and struck him a good hard blow on the back.

But that did not stop him, nor make him drop the meat. Off he flew, and by his magic power the pole stuck fast to his back, and Lo-ke's hands stuck fast to the pole. And as he had so much to carry, he flew along heavily close to the ground, so that the unlucky Lo-ke was dragged along with his feet striking against rocks and stones and stumps, while his face was scratched by the bushes and brambles.

He begged loudly for mercy, but the giant would not let him go till he promised to bring him the Apples of Youth.

How the Apples of Youth were stolen. Now these apples were very much prized by the gods, for it was by eating them that they kept always young and strong. They were in the care of a goddess named *Idwyn*.

Lo-ke was very cunning, so he let no one know what he had promised. But he went to *Idwyn* and told her, that he had found some beautiful apples in a wood just outside the land of the gods, and that he was sure they were even finer than those she had.

Idwyn was simple enough to take her apples and go with him to see. For she

22 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

thought that by setting them beside the others, she would easily prove to him that none could be so fine as hers. When she got to the wood Daze was waiting for her, and he soon carried her off to Giantland.

swoop'-ed	quart'-ers	tal'-ons	greed'-y
snatch'-ed	mag'-ic	heav'-i-ly	bram'-bles
scratch'-ed	mer'-cy	bram'-bles	ea'-si-ly

LESSON 8.

Lo-ke sent after the Apples.—In a short time the gods missed Idwyn and her apples, and found themselves growing old and grey-headed.

What was to be done? They held a meeting to find out what had become of her. And then it came out that she had been seen going out of the gods' land with Lo-ke, and that since that day no one had set eyes on her.

Lo-ke was made to confess his wickedness, and he was told that, unless he brought Idwyn and her apples back at once, he should smart for his crime. So he borrowed a hawk's skin and wings, and away he went to Daze's house.



GIANT DAZE AT HOME,

Luckily the giant was out fishing, so Lo-ke caught up Idwyn in his talons and flew homeward as fast as he could.

The Giant is killed.—Before he had gone very far, Daze came home and missed Idwyn. He soon guessed what had happened, took his eagle-shape, and started after Lo-ke. He flew so fast, and made such mighty strokes with his broad wings, that he was close behind Lo-ke as they came in sight of the gates of the gods' city.

But all the gods were out on the walls watching, and, when they saw how things were going, they brought out heaps of dry shavings and laid them along the top of the wall. And as soon as Lo-ke and Idwyn had flown over, they set fire to these shavings, and they blazed up in a twinkling.

Daze was close behind the run-a-ways, and he was flying so fast that he could not stop himself, but dashed plump into the middle of the blaze. The fire caught his wings and burnt off the feathers, and down he came tumbling to the ground inside the gods' city; and before he could get up the gods slew him.

What was done with the Giant's Eyes. Now Giant Daze had a daughter called *Scathe*, and she put on her father's helmet and

coat of mail, and took sword and spear, and came to the city of the gods to punish them for her father's death.

But the gods soothed her with fair words, and it was agreed that she should choose one of them to be her husband. Moreover, they were to make her laugh, for she had never been able to laugh all her life. So she was married, and at the wedding Lo-ke played such funny tricks that she began to laugh heartily. But what pleased her most of all was, that the king of the gods put the eyes of her dead father Daze into the sky. And there they shine for evermore.

grey-head'-ed	wick'-ed-ness	luck'-i-ly	home'-ward
tal'-ons	guess'-ed	brood	shav'-ings
blaze'-d	twink'-ling	caught	feath'-ers
helm'-et	sooth'-ed	choose	more-ov'-er
laugh	heart'-i-ly	con-fess'	wed'-ding

Coat of mail: Coat of armour made of small metal rings firmly linked together.

LESSON 9.

Scathe and her Husband.—Scathe's husband was the god of riches, and he lived by the sea, but Scathe wished to live at her

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father's house in the waste hills, among the wild beasts. So they agreed to change houses every ten days, and thus each was pleased in turn.

Her husband was glad when it was the day for leaving the hills, and sang —

Just nine nights on the hills I've slept,
But, oh, it seemed so long !
I hate to hear the wolf's long howl,
I love the swan's sweet song.

But Scathe could not bear the sea, and when she was going up to the hills again she sang—

I cannot sleep beside the sea :
The gulls they scream and cry,
The seamews wake me every morn
As they flit shrieking by.

The Seven Sisters.—There is a tiny knot of stars near the Bull called the *Seven Sisters*, or the *Hen and Chickens*. When they were seen in the spring people knew that the storms of winter were past, and that the time had come for going fishing or for travelling over sea. So they were sometimes called the *Sailing Stars*. And that is the name they go by now, only we use a Greek word instead of an English one, and call them the *Plei-ad-es*.

You can only see six stars in the knot now,

but it is said that once upon a time there were seven. Among many nations there are stories telling how the seventh star got lost, but the old English tale about them has been forgotten.

Tom Thumb and his Wagon.—There is only one more star-cluster to be spoken of now, and that is the one best known of all. It is always to be seen in the cloudless night sky, and it is very clear and bright. We call it the *Wagon and Horses*, or the *Cart and Oxen*.

Four big stars in a square mark the two side wheels and the ends of the wagon, and three in a row the horses or oxen that draw it. And above the middle horse is a tiny star—the *Driver*. He is called *Thumbkin*, or *Tom Thumb*, because he is so small that it is rather hard to see him. Many of you know stories about Tom Thumb. How his mother lost him, and how he was found again and went to court, and became a famous fellow. So I need not tell you more of him and his Wagon and Team.

hus'-band	a-greed'	knot	trav'-ell-ing
na'-tions	knew	sev'-enth	for-got'-ten
clus'-ter	wag'-on	fa'-mous	thumb

LESSON 10.

The English become Christians.—It was just about two hundred years after the English had first settled in Britain, that there came to them clergymen from Rome and Ireland and Scotland, to teach them and to preach the new faith.

They listened to them though they would not listen to the Welsh, whom they disliked, for they did not yet see that it is wise to learn from everyone, no matter who he is, friend or foe, anything that is worth learning. The English were glad to hear their words, and learn the good and useful arts they taught them. And when they saw that these teachers were earnest, upright men, who thought little of pain, or care, or toil if they could only win folks over to think as they did, they followed their teaching and became Christians.

Bede.—After the English had become Christians, there lived in an *abbey*—a house of religious people—in Northumberland, a clergyman named Bede. He was a wise man, and wrote many books about things which he thought it would be useful for Englishmen to know.

But the best book he wrote, is his History of the Christian People of England down to his own day. In it he tells how the English shook off heathen ways, and speaks of the lives and deeds of many good men of all ranks—kings and clergymen, rich and poor—whom he had known or heard of. And were it not for him, we should know much less about our forefathers than we do now.

Cadmon, the Horse-tender.—This is one of the stories he tells: There lived in Yorkshire, as servant of an abbey there, a man named Cadmon, who had charge of the horses.

He was a kind-hearted, thoughtful man, but was not believed to have any knowledge or skill above the common. He could neither sing nor play on the harp, as most of his friends and neighbours had learnt to do. And this vexed him a good deal, for it often happened, when there was a merry-making among them, that one of them would say, 'Bring in the harp, and everyone shall sing his song and play in his turn to amuse the company.'

And the harp would be passed round, and each man would sing in turn, and everyone would praise the man who had sung last.

30 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

But when the harp came near Cadmon, he would get up for shame before his turn to sing and play came, and leave the company, even though the merry-making were not half over.

set'-tled	cler'-gy-men	preach	list'-en-ed
dis-like'-d	friend	teach'-ers	ear'-nest
up'-right	re-lig'-ious	folks	ab'-bey
com'-pan-y	serv'-ant	thought'-ful	be-lieve'-d

LESSON 11.

Cadmon's Dream.—One night this had happened, and poor Cadmon had come back to the stable where he slept, and laid him down and fallen asleep. As he slept he had a wonderful dream: he thought that a man whom he did not know came to him, and greeted him, and said, 'Sing me something, Cadmon.' Upon which he answered, 'I do not know how to sing. And it is just because I could not sing that I left the company to-night, and came home here to bed.'

But the man said, 'For all that you must sing to me.' 'What shall I sing about then?' said Cadmon. 'Sing of the beginning of all

things,' replied the man. And with that Cadmon began to sing a beautiful song he had never heard before. The first words of it were—

Let us magnify meetly the Master of Heaven ;
The might of the Maker, the thoughts of His mind.

When he woke, strange to tell, he not only remembered what he had sung in his sleep, but was able to go on with the song, and put fresh verses to it as easily as if he had been a poet all his life.

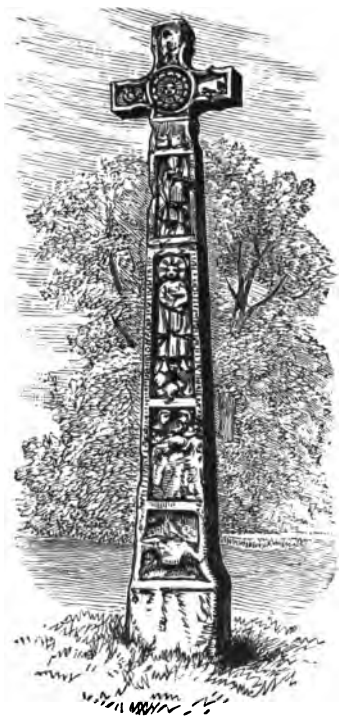
Cadmon becomes a Poet.—He wondered very much at this gift which he had got in so strange a way. And, when the day broke, he went to the steward of the farm and made known to him what had happened.

The steward took him to the lady who was at the head of the abbey, and there, before her and the learned men who lived there, he told his dream and sang his song. They thought that he had gotten a gift from God ; but, to prove him, they told him a story out of the Bible which he had never heard—for Cadmon had never learnt to read. And they bade him turn what they had told him into verse, and say it to them the next day.

The Ruthwell Cross.—On the morrow

32 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

Cadmon came back, and sang them a fine poem which he had made out of what they had told him the day before.



THE RUTHWELL CROSS.

Then the lady said he must make good use of the gift he had. So he left his stable and became one of the brethren in the abbey.

And bit by bit he learnt nearly all the Bible stories, and put them into verse.

Everyone was eager to learn his verses, and they spread far and wide, and some of them we still have written in old parchment books.

At Ruthwell, a place near the English border, there is a tall stone cross to be seen. It is beautifully carved with figures out of Bible stories. And there are verses in old English cut upon its sides. And on the top is the name of Cadmon. Cadmon died twelve hundred years ago, about the time that Bede, the historian, was born.

hap'-pen-ed	sta'-ble	won'-der-ful	greet'-ed
com'-pan-y	be-gin'-ning	re-pli'-ed	heard
re-mem'-ber-ed	ea'-si-ly	verses	stew'-ard
known	got'-ten	po'-em	breth'-ren
learnt	eag'-er	parch'-ment	his-tor'-i-an

Parchment: Dried and prepared sheep-skin used for writing upon. It is stronger and will last longer than paper.

LESSON 12.

Bede's Home at Jarrow.—Bede was a man who never liked to be idle for a moment. He was regular and true to time in all his

daily duties, and every hour that he could spare from his work as a clergyman, he spent in reading and writing. For he said that he wished to leave books which might be useful to those that came after him.

And this he was able to do, for his books have never fallen out of knowledge, as so many books have. They were read far and wide in old days, so that within a few years of his death there was scarcely a big library where there was not some of them to be found. And to this very day we print and read the best of his writings.

He died at Jarrow, where he had lived all his life, and there you may still see part of the old church in which he so often preached and prayed, and a chair, which is said to have been his.

Bede's Last Illness.—A faithful account of his death is given by one of the friends who was with him in his last hours. It shows very well what kind of man Bede was.

He fell ill about a fortnight before he died, and, feeling that his time was short, he tried to make the most of every minute that was left him. One of the chief things he did during these days, was to turn the Gospel of John into English.

The day before he died he grew weaker, and found it hard to breathe. But he was still cheerful, and passed the morning dictating the Gospel to a little boy named Wilbert, who wrote down the verses, one by one, as fast as Bede turned them into English. Now and again, as Wilbert wrote, Bede would say: 'Get on as quickly as you can, for I do not know how soon I may be gone.'

Bede's Death.—On the day he died, Wednesday, May 9th, 742 A.D., he worked all the morning as before, and reached the last chapter. Before that was quite finished he turned to a friend and said: 'I have a few small treasures here in my little box. Do you go quickly and call together to my room the brothers of the abbey, that I may share all I have among them.'

And when they were come to his bedside, he spoke cheerfully and kindly to them one and all, and gave each of them some little gift. And they wept to see that he would soon be gone from among them, but they were glad to know that he was not afraid to die.

When the bell rang for evening service, the boy, Wilbert, said to him, 'Dear Master, still there is one verse to be written.' 'Then write quickly,' said Bede, and told him the

36 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

words to put down. 'Now it is finished!' said the boy, as he laid down his pen. 'Yes, it is finished,' Bede said; 'and now lift my head and hold me up, so that I may turn my eyes toward the church where I have been used to pray.' And, as the boy was holding him up, he breathed his last, with a prayer on his lips.

reg'-u-lar	du'-ties	cler'-gy-man	preach'-ed
pray'-ed	faith'-ful	ac count'	fort'-night
chief	breathe	cheer'-ful	dic-tat'-ing
Wed'-nes-day	treas'-ures	broth'-ers	breathe'-d
a-fraid'	ser'-vice	chap'-ter	dur'-ing

Jarrow : A town on the south of the river Tyne in Durham.

A.D. (Latin: *anno domini*) : In the year of the Lord. We reckon to and from the year when Jesus Christ was born, and it was Bede that first got Englishmen to use this date.

LESSON 13.

King Alfred.—King Alfred, who lived one hundred and fifty years after Bede's death, thought so highly of his History, that he wished all English people should be able to read it. And as it was in Latin, a tongue which few understood, he himself was at the pains to turn it into English for their use.

Of King Alfred himself there is much

worth telling. He was a man who was greatly beloved in his lifetime, and highly honoured after his death, for he spent the whole of his reign in trying to do all he could for the good of his people. He had been abroad when he was a little boy, and he was always fond of hearing about other lands, and learning all he could of the ways and doings and wisdom of their people.

There were two sea-captains he knew who had sailed along the North Sea and north-eastern coasts, and learnt about the land and people there. And what these two captains told him he wrote down and put into a book for Englishmen to read.

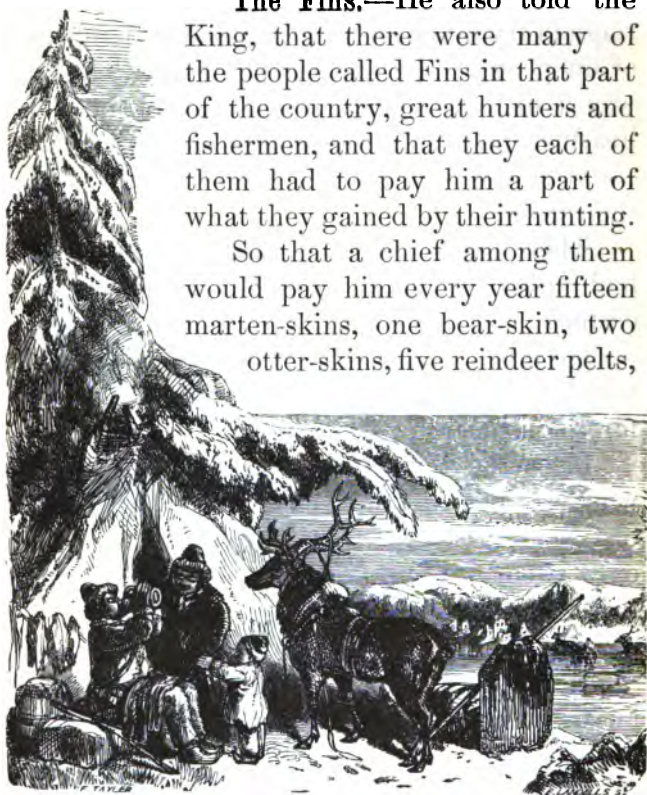
Otter the Merchant.—One of these men, who was named Otter, came from the north of Norway. He told Alfred that, with only twenty sheep, twenty oxen, and twenty pigs, he was the richest man in that part of the country.

He said, too, that he grew very little grain in his fields, and that was rye for bread, because neither wheat nor barley would grow so far north. But his wealth lay in his great herd of reindeer, of which he had more than seven hundred. And these useful beasts yielded him butter and cheese, and milk

and meat, and leather enough for himself and all his men.

The Fins.—He also told the King, that there were many of the people called Fins in that part of the country, great hunters and fishermen, and that they each of them had to pay him a part of what they gained by their hunting.

So that a chief among them would pay him every year fifteen marten-skins, one bear-skin, two otter-skins, five reindeer pelts,



REINDEER.

two weights of the small light feathers which we call eider-down, and two ropes made of

walrus hide. And these goods he used to bring in his ship to England and sell for such things as he needed.

There are still Fins in the north part of Norway and Sweden. And farther to the east there is a land called Finland, where the Fins dwell under their own government. They do not get their living by hunting now, as they did in Alfred's days. But they are good sailors and hard-working farmers, and grow grain, both rye and oats, much of which they send for sale to other lands.

thought	tongue	Lat'-in	be-love'-d
hon'-our-ed	reign	try'-ing	a-broad'
wis'-dom	capt'-ains	wal'-rus	fields
bar'-ley	rein'-deer	herd	yield'-ed
leath'-er	pelts	weights	ei'-der-down

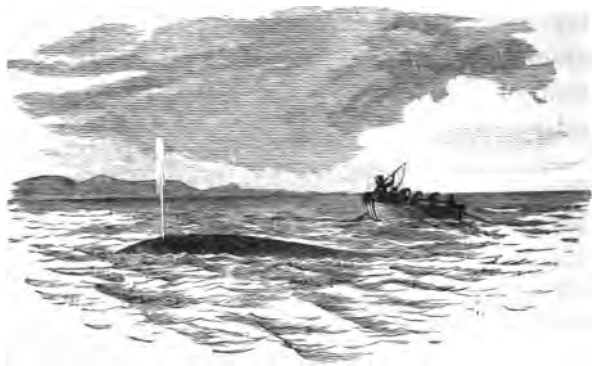
Latin: A language formerly spoken by the Romans. In early times all learned men wrote in this language.

LESSON 14.

Whale-fishery and Seal-hunting.—Otter said, too, that there were many whales in the sea near where he lived, some even

seventy-five feet long or more, which he and his men would hunt and kill for their meat, oil, and bones.

Whale-fishers in those days were not obliged to go to the far North in great ships after the whales, for the whales had not yet been frightened away from the coasts of the North Sea. So when the fishermen saw a



WHALE-FISHING.

school of whales (as a flock of these beasts is called) near the shore, they used to row out to sea as fast as they could to get behind them.

As soon as they had got the school between themselves and the shore, they would whoop and shout, and make as much noise as they could to drive the timid whales into the

shallow water. And when the poor beasts had swum so close to the shore that they could not



WALRUS-HUNTING.

get away, they killed them with spears, and harpoons, and lances.

Otter's Merchandise.—In the Faröes, a tiny group of islands which you will find in your map to the north-west of Scotland, they still hunt whales, just as Otter and his men did in the old time.

Otter also told King Alfred, that they used to hunt and kill the seals and walruses, that came to the coast in summer, from whose hides the best of ropes were made for rigging ships and boats. For in those days there was no wire rope, and chains were not put to such uses.

He also told the King that the tusks of the walruses and narwhals were the finest of ivory, and that he sold them to the English and French merchants to be made into caskets and cups, and sword-hilts and chessmen, and many other beautiful things. And Otter gave one of the biggest tusks he had to King Alfred.

fish'-er-y	sev'-en-ty	o-blige'-d	fright'-en-ed
school	whoop	har'-poon	group
is'-lands	wal'-rus-es	nar'-whals	i'-vor-y
mer'-chant	cask'-ets	chess'-men	tusks

LESSON 15.

Trade in Old Days.—So you see, even in those far-off days, just as now, trade was carried on between different parts of the world.

Savages were hunting wild beasts in the wilderness, to get the furs which merchants bore over the stormy sea to richer lands, for the wear of gentlefolks, taking back with them to the wild countries sharp steel weapons, and fine linen, and clothes, and jewels, and wine, and such other things as could not be found there. So that all got what they wanted, and were the better for the trade.

The merchant, too, made his gain, for he charged the men to whom he sold his goods a little more than what he gave for them, that he might have money enough to buy food with and pay his crew, and keep his wife and children and household in comfort.

The Story of the Archer on the Carved Ivory Box.—There are many pretty things still to be seen, which were carved long ago

out of the same kind of ivory as that tusk, which Otter gave King Alfred.

One of the oldest of these is a little box made of ivory, the sides and top of which are very neatly and carefully carved. The carvings show little figures, and are taken from old tales and from the Bible stories.

One of the old tales of which there is a carving, is the tale of the death of *Agil the Archer*—a tale so old that no doubt it was told to Alfred when he was a boy.

Agil the Archer was one of three brothers, so the old story goes, who were all skilful at their several crafts. One of them was a famous smith, who was so clever, that when he was lamed and imprisoned on an island by a cruel and greedy king, he contrived to make a pair of wings that would carry him off through the air, and so got free again. There is a carving of him upon the ivory box, and also upon an old stone cross at Leeds.

The second brother was a famous harper, who played so beautifully, that he could make folks do almost what he chose, when they were listening to his harping. The third brother was Agil, who was such a good archer that he never missed his mark, and

you shall now hear some things that are told of him.

dif-fer-ent	merch'-ants	gen'-tle-folks	weap'-ons
clothes	jew'-els	lin'-en	mon'-ey
e-nough'	crew	far'-ther	gov'-ern-ment
i'vor-y	fig'-ures	arch'-er	skil'-ful
craft	im-pris'-on-ed	house'-hold	oom'-fort

LESSON 16.

Agil and his Son.—Agil and his little son, whom he dearly loved, once fell into the hands of a certain king whom he had offended. The king had the archer brought before him bound, and said to him, ‘I have it in my mind to slay you, but I should like to see if you are as good an archer as folks say, so I will give you a chance to save your life.’

Then he had Agil's son led forth and an apple set on his head, and he told Agil that he must go forty paces off and shoot at the apple. ‘If you miss the mark altogether you shall die, and if you shoot your son you will punish yourself. If you hit the apple, I will set you both free.’

There was nothing else for it. Agil was obliged to obey and agree to do as the king

wished. So the king bade them loose his hands and bring him his bow and arrows.

Agil's Bow and Arrows.—The king's soldiers who had taken Agil prisoner had seized his bow and arrows, for they knew that if he had been able to use them, he would have shot some of them. They now brought the bow and quiver and gave them back to him. The bow was made of red yew-wood, with neatly-fitted tips of horn to hold the bow-string. It was thicker, heavier, and stronger than other men's bows.

Agil took the bow and bent it between his hands to try if the wood was sound, and he saw to the string that it was unfrayed and strong. Then he strung it carefully, slipping the bowstring's noose firmly into the groove at the tip of the bow. And from his quiver he chose two fine, smooth, straight, evenly weighted, trim-feathered, well-nocked, sharp-headed arrows.

One he put in his belt, the other he fitted to the string. Then he begged the people who stood round not to make a noise, and to stand still while he was shooting, and, walking forty paces from where the boy stood, took his stand and made ready to shoot.

The Wonderful Shot.—First he called out

to his son to be steady and shut his eyes, and not to shrink when he heard the bow-string twang. And now he drew himself up



AGIL THE ARCHER SHOOTING THE APPLE FROM HIS SON'S HEAD.

with both feet planted steadily on the ground, and stretched out his left arm level with his shoulder, grasping the middle of the bow firmly

in his hand. Then clasping the arrow tightly with the two first fingers and the thumb of his right hand, he drew the string steadily and deftly back to his ear.

His eyes were fixed upon the apple as he loosed the arrow. Twang went the string, whir went the arrow; then came a thud and the apple fell to the ground from the boy's head in two pieces, cleft in the very middle by the broad sharp arrow-head.

There was a shout of wonder and joy at this feat of skill. 'You have saved your boy's life and your own too,' said the king, 'but tell me why you took two arrows when you were so sure of hitting your mark?' 'Because if I had hit my son with the one I should have shot the other at you, and I do not think that I should have missed *you*.'

The king was mightily displeased at the bold archer's words, but for the sake of his promise he was obliged to let him go free.

of-fend'-ed	folks	pac'-es	pun'-ish
shoot	o-blige'-d	sold'-iers	loose
seize'-d	heav'-i-er	ar'-rows	un-fray'-ed
care'-ful-ly	noose	quiv'-er	smooth
straight	weight'-ed	feath'-er-ed	nock'-ed
stead'-y	twang	deft'-ly	feat

Nock: The notch cut at the butt-end of the arrow, so that it may fit the string.

LESSON 17.

Agil's Quarrel with his Wife.—Agil's wife was a beautiful woman with a fair face, and yellow hair so long that it fell to her feet. But she was not good-tempered or truthful, and had a cunning and revengeful mind.

One day she made him so angry by an ill-deed that he forgot himself, and struck her a blow with his open hand.

This was bad, but what came of it was worse. Agil had bitter foes that had long sought his life, and one night they gathered together and beset his house. The house was strongly built, and the doors barred and bolted so that they could not get in, and Agil went up to a loft that had a window in it, and shot out at his foes, and killed some and wounded others with his sharp arrows. They cast spears up at him but did not touch him.

After a while they gave back and withdrew a little, thinking that it was of no use to go on with their plan. One of them would have had them set fire to the house, but the others would not hear of it, for they said it would be a cowardly thing to burn out a brave man like a fox in his den.

While they were talking, Agil looked out of the window and saw a spear-shaft sticking in the roof below, so he put out his hand and pulled it out of the thatch and hurled it at a man that was standing apart from the rest, nearer the house, and it struck him and he fell wounded. Then one of the others said: 'If Agil had arrows to spare he would not need to use our weapons. Let us fall to once more, lads!'

Agil loses the use of his Bow.—So they made another onset, but without much more success at first, for Agil's shooting was deadly, and they had to take great care to keep out of the way of his arrows.

At last they took up a rope that was lying in the yard, and tied one end to a heavy stone, and so cast it over the roof of the loft. And now it hung over the top they caught hold of it, and pulled at the ends till they had torn the ridge-pole of the loft out, and brought the thatch and roof-beams off, leaving the bare walls. And while the laths and thatch were falling about Agil's ears, one of his foes climbed on to the roof beside the loft, and crept round to the window, and hewed at Agil with his sword. The blow missed him but cut his bowstring. But Agil had his drawn sword by

his side, and he snatched it up and smote the man a heavy blow, so that he fell down off the roof and broke his legs with the fall.

Agil's Wife brings about his Death.—When the enemies of Agil picked up the fallen man and heard that he had cut Agil's bowstring—for it was not yet day, and there was not light enough for them to see clearly what had happened—they set up a shout of joy.

But Agil turned to his wife who was sitting quietly in a corner of the loft out of harm's way, and said, 'Give me two locks of your hair and twine them together to make me a fresh bowstring, for mine is cut.' But she answered, 'Does much lie on your having a fresh bowstring?' 'Only my life lies on it,' said he, 'for as long as I can shoot they can never overcome me.' 'Then I will never give you a hair of my head, for I do not forget the slap you gave me, and whether you are overcome or not I do not care.' Agil answered, 'Well then, I must look to myself as long as I can, and you will not have to wait long for the end.'

And he was right, for now his foes no longer feared his arrows, they climbed up, a number of them together, to the window of

the loft, and broke in. And in spite of the stout stand he made with his sword he fell dead at last, overpowered with their numbers.

They all acknowledged that they had never heard tell of a single man making such a brave defence against a number of foes. And songs were made of Agil's death and his wife's revenge. And on the old ivory box you may still see the carving of Agil shooting out of his window, and his wife sitting beside him, and his foes outside with swords and weapons besetting his house to slay him.

truth'-ful	cun'-ning	re-venge'-ful	sought
foes	gath'-er-ed	built	bar'-red
cow'-ard-ly	thatch	hurl'-ed	wound'-ed
weap'-ons	suc-cess'	laths	climb'-ed
hew'-ed	en'-em-ies	ac-know'-ledg-ed	de-fence'

LESSON 18.

Little Nesting.—King Alfred was fond of hunting when he was a young man. After he came to be king he was too busy to hunt for amusement. Yet he would sometimes go out with his horses and hounds to get fresh meat, venison, or game, for his household.

One day, as he was riding through a wood

with his huntsmen, he heard a cry from a tall tree that stood on a rock, not very far from his path. He bade one of his men go to the tree, and see what it was that was making the noise. The man went to the tree and found that the cry came from a great eagle's nest of sticks that lay on a fork of the branches some way from the ground. He climbed up, and to his great surprise saw a little child lying in the bottom of the nest. It was wrapped in a purple cloth, and had tiny coils of gold round its little arms.

The man took it up carefully and carried it down to the King. Alfred sent it home to his house, and gave it to the women to be taken care of. It was called Nesting because it had been found in the eagle's nest, for the King never got to know whose child it was, or who had put it into the tree. And the child grew up and became a man, and served the King and his sons after him well and worthily.

Children of the Olden Times.—Old English books do not often speak of children, so that we do not know much about them and their life, as we do of the grown-up people, but some things which we do know shall be set down here.

Children of free people (for you must know that there were slaves in England in those days) were dressed after the same way as their mothers and fathers, but they nearly always went barefooted and bare-headed. Their hair was carefully combed and braided, and left to grow all its length, for it was only slaves that had their hair cut short.

They wore a little string of beads of glass or gold or silver round their necks, and their throats and arms were tattooed, just as you may see sailors tattooed nowadays.

Children's Games in the Old Days.—The girls played with dolls made of rags or wood, and made believe to do washing and cooking, and spinning and flax-dressing, and other things which they saw their mothers busy about. When they were old enough they learnt how to spin and sew and embroider, and cook and do household work.

The boys used to play at football and hockey, and sliding and skating, and at trundling rings and hoops. They were fond of wrestling, tumbling, leaping, and turning head-over-heels, and the like. Sometimes they played at being soldiers or huntsmen or shepherds. They used, too, to have matches

at nine-men's morris, and at marbles and knuckle-bones.

There was always sport out of doors: feeding the beasts, playing with the dogs, bird-nesting, fishing, or the like. For there were no towns so big but that a boy could get out into the fields in a few minutes. But he might not go far alone, for there were wolves and other fierce beasts roaming about even close to the cities, so that it was not safe for a child to stray out of sight of a house.

a-muse'-ment	busy	ven'-i-son	sur-prise'
heard	eag'-le	wrap'-ped	pur'-ple
coils	care'-ful-ly	worth'-i-ly	moth'-er
fath'-er	bare-foot'-ed	bare-head'-ed	comb'-ed
braid'-ed	throats	tat-too'-ed	hock'-ey
trund'-ling	knuck'-le	fierce	cit'-ies

Tattooed: Drawings of different figures, as birds, &c., were pricked into the skin in colours.

LESSON 19.

Wild Beasts in England.—One story will show you the dangers of the woods in those days.

There was a king of England, named

Edgar, one of Alfred's great-grandchildren, who fought against a king of the Welsh, for



WOLVES AND SHEEP.

the Welsh and Scots had kings of their own in those days.

The English king, Edgar, beat the Welsh

king, and, as a mark of his victory, made the Welsh king promise to pay him 300 wolves' heads every year.

You may be sure the shepherds and herdsmen were glad of this, for the wolves did great damage to their flocks and herds, breaking into the folds by night, worrying the sheep, or killing the weak and young among the cattle.

The Welsh king and his men had many a hunt to get the heads to send to England, and for two years they duly paid the English king. But in the third year they could not find enough wolves in Wales, for they had killed nearly all of them. So the English king forgave them their debt.

Now, if there were so many wolves in Wales, there were no doubt a good many in England. It is now very long since wolves were killed out of England, but in Ireland and Scotland they were to be found less than one hundred and fifty years ago.

Hunting in the Olden Times.—So that in those days hunting was not a mere sport as it now is in England, but men were obliged to hunt to kill the wild beasts, just as they have to do now in many parts of the world.

Another reason why men hunted them

was to get change of food. For as there was little hay, it was not possible to keep much cattle through the winter. And there were no means of bringing fresh fish to places inland. And so folks must have lived on salt meat and salt fish, which was neither pleasant nor healthy, unless they had been able to get other food now and again. For if people live long on salt meat alone they fall ill, and suffer dreadful pain from an illness called *scurvy*.

Fresh vegetables and fresh meat will prevent such an illness; so it is very seldom you hear of it in England nowadays, though in the olden times it was not uncommon. And till people found out the right way to ward off this ailment, sailors on long voyages often died of it, as you will see if you read the 'Story of Anson,' the brave English captain who sailed round the world in 1740.

dan'-ger	vic'-tor-y	prom'-ise	dam'-age
wor'-ry-ing	du'-ly	for-gave'	debt
doubt	Eng'-land	Scot'-land	Ire'-land
poss'-i-ble	pleas'-ant	health'-y	veg'-e-ta-bles
ail'-ment	voy'-a-ges	child'-ren	scur'-vy

LESSON 20.

Lessons and Schooling.—You will like to know what boys had to learn in the olden times.

If they were workmen's sons they had to learn their father's trade or craft, as soon as they were old enough to handle hammer or saw. If they were farmers' sons they had to learn to plough and reap, and thrash and mow, and tend cattle and sheep. If they were gentlefolks' sons they had to learn to fence and ride, and to do soldier's duty, and to know the law. For when they were grown up they would have to serve in the king's guard, or to be captains in the army when it was called out, and to go to court and act as judges or lawyers or jurymen.

Only those boys who were going to be clergymen were taught any book-learning beyond reading and writing. But clergymen had to learn Latin, and singing, and how to read and understand the books of learned men. So, like the boy Wilbert, who was Bede's little clerk, they were set to their books early.

Old Lesson-Books.—We have some of the

old parchment lesson-books they used, out of which the master read the lesson to the pupil, who had to get it by heart. There is a set of questions and answers in one of these books.

Here are some of them: 'Q. What is snow?—A. Dried water. Q. What is a letter?



OLD ENGLISH MAP OF THE WORLD.

—A. A silent messenger. Q. Describe the moon.—A. The moon is the eye of night, the giver of dew, the foreteller of the weather. Q. I know a certain thing that flies. It has an iron beak, a wooden body, and a feathered tail, and it carries death with it. What is it? —A. An arrow. Q. Describe a ship.—A. It is a house that moves, an inn that travels with

its guests, a wayfarer that leaves no footprints behind.'

In other lesson-books of those days are maps of the world, such as are copied here. You will see that it is very unlike the maps of the world you know, and that America is not on it at all, for it was not then known. It is certain that most lesson-books are more correct now than they were then, though they are perhaps not quite so amusing

hand'-le	plough	guard	capt'-ain
law'-yers	clerk	parch'-ment	pu'-pil
quest'-ion	an'-swer	mess'-en-ger	de-scribe'
fore-tell'-er	weath'-er	cert'-ain	wood'-en
trav'-els	cop'-ied	cor-rect'	way'-far-er

Fence : Practice to learn the use of the sword and spear.

Jurymen : Men who have to attend at the courts to decide upon the right or wrong of cases.

LESSON 21.

Eating and Drinking.—In another book, the master asks, 'What do you get to eat?' And the boy answers, 'Meat, and herbs, and fish, and butter, and cheese, and beans.' 'And what to drink?' 'Water,' replies the boy; 'but beer when I am able to get it.'

It was common in those days, for well-to-do folk to have fish and milk for dinner three days a week—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The other days they would have bacon and beans with beer; and on Sundays fresh meat and kale if it could be got. Poor folk had to be content with porridge, and black bread made of rye, and skim-milk all the year round, and sometimes a little broth of herbs and meat, and at harvest time a dish of broiled herring, but they seldom tasted fresh roast meat.

Holiday Fare.—At holiday times there was a good deal of eating and drinking, and there were different kinds of food fixed for every feast in the year: sweet porridge at Christmas, eggs at Easter, buns on Good Friday, goose at Michaelmas, and so on.

But there were many things unknown to Englishmen in those days, which we should not like to go without now. Neither tea, nor coffee, nor sugar, nor potatoes, nor oranges, were known in England till hundreds of years after the days we are talking of. So that, as far as eating and drinking goes, the good old days were by no means so good as the days we live in.

Silly Beliefs.—In the old days, too, people,

even after they were Christians, were often frightened and unhappy, by reason of their foolish fancies and silly beliefs.

They were afraid to walk about at night for fear of ghosts, and witches, and fairies, and bogies, and many other things which do not exist at all. They believed in spells and charms, which can do no good whatever. They even tried to foretell what was to happen by thinking over their dreams, or looking at the stars, or the marks on sheep's blade-bones, or casting lots, which could never be of the slightest use.

But all those things they did in secret, because the Christian clergymen told them that they were not only foolish but wrong. And little by little, the wiser and better among them cast off these silly fancies, and laughed at them, as all sensible people now do.

Old-fashioned Doctoring.—They had many strange ideas too about doctoring themselves, and they took strange things to cure illness. If a child had a fever, they would put him on the roof of the house to drive the witches away, who, as they thought, had made him ill.

They would wear a wolf's hair in a bag hung round their neck to cure ague, and

drink a broth made of snake's flesh to strengthen their lungs. They thought that warts and boils and sprains could be charmed away, by saying a string of rhymes over the bad place.

All these things seem very laughable to us, but it was a long while before people left off such foolish dealings, and found out the right way to treat sick people, and the fit drugs to give them to cure their illness.

It was a bad thing to be ill in the old days, for there were no fine hospitals with kindly nurses and skilful pains-taking doctors, and no ways of lulling pain or of bringing sleep to those who were suffering. Even kings and queens in those days could not get the care that a poor man now-a-days may have when he is hurt or ill.

laugh'-a-ble	re-plies'	Mon'-day	Wed'-nes-day
Fri'-day	ba'-con	Sun'-day	por'-ridge
broil'-ed	ho'-li-day	broth	Christ'-mas
East'-er	Mich'-ael-mas	coff'-ee	po-ta'-toes
sug'-ar	or'-an-ges	fan'-cies	be-liefs'
ghost	witch'-es	fair'-ies	bo'-gies
fore-tell'	sen'-si-ble	rhymes	a'-gue

Michaelmas : The 29th of September.

Ague : A disease, the chief sign of which is a constant shivering.

Kale : Cabbage.

LESSON 22.

The Danes.—King Alfred, of whom you have read before, had a very un-easy reign. In his time a fierce and warlike host of soldiers and sailors, under leaders called Sea-Kings, came across the North Sea, from Norway and Denmark, and won a great part of England, and settled down here to live. These people are known as the *Danes* and *Northmen*.

They lived in lands less fruitful and rich than England, and when they heard that the English coast was not guarded, and that the English land was so fair and pleasant, they set out in great fleets and came here to win plunder, and a new home for themselves. We can tell what these Danes were like, because we have some of their songs and stories, and many of their weapons and jewels and other things have been found in the ground.

A Sea-King's Burial.—When a Danish sea-king died, his people dressed him in his best clothes, put his helmet on his head, set his shield on his arm and his sword in his

hand, and laid him on board his ship, which they dragged ashore.

Then they killed his wife and slaves, and favourite horses and hounds, and laid them by him, with gold and silver and jewels, so that he might not lack in the other life any of the comfort he had been used to in this. For they were heathens, as the English had once been, and thought that when a man died his soul lived another life, very like the life he had left.

Just as the Red Indians still believe that when they die they will go to a Happy Hunting Ground, to pass their time for ever in fighting or hunting or feasting, as they do when they are alive. When the Danes had settled the dead man's goods and followers round him on the ship, they set fire to the bodies, and burnt them all to ashes. Afterwards they threw up a huge round heap of earth, covering ship and all, and this mound was for a sign and a memory of the dead for ever.

The Sea-King's Grave.—Not long ago in Norway a great mound near the sea was opened. Inside it was found a fine ship of oak, which had kept sound and unhurt under the earth for hundreds of years, and in a cabin on the deck of it were the bones of a

king, and there were the bones of horses and hounds and peacocks found beside the ship. The ship was dug out carefully and taken to the chief town of Norway, and there it is still to be seen. It is most likely one of the very vessels in which the Northmen sailed to England.

On the high downs in England you may see a heap of earth and stones called a 'barrow,' and that is all that is left of such a burial-place. But as the heathen English were not much busied on the sea, we do not find ships or boats inside mounds in England.

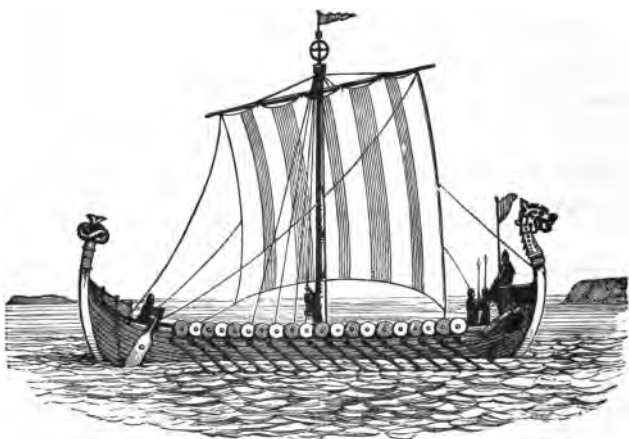
un-ea'-sy	reign	fierce	sold'-iers
set'-tled	fruit'-ful	guard'-ed	plun'-der
weap'-ons	helm'-et	jew'-els	fa'-vour-ite
com'-fort	sign	mem'-or-y	cab'-in
bur'-i-al	bus'-i-ed	huge	In'-di-an

LESSON 23.

A Northman's War-Ship.—You have, perhaps, been at the sea-side and seen ships and boats. If so you will easily understand from my words what kind of ships the Northmen and Danes used, but if not you must look at the cut, and try and make out what you can

from it. You will see that it is rather like a big long boat than one of our ships of to-day.

She is 60 feet long at the *keel*, which is the back-bone, as it were, of the whole ship, and 77 feet long from the tip of the stem to the top of the stern-post. She is 17 feet wide, and



AN OLD NORTHERN SHIP OF WAR.

about 5 feet deep amid-ships. She is built of 16 *strakes* or rows of oaken boards fitted closely together, and lapping closely one over the other as in our small boats. She has a level *deck* or floor running nearly all her length, with two little *half-decks* like small platforms, a little higher than the long deck at the stem

and stern, so that the helmsman and look-out man may be the better able to see what they are about.

The Oars and Mast.—On board of this ship are three small boats, so that the crew can go ashore in places where they cannot get the ship close to the land for the shallowness of the water. You cannot see the small boats behind the shields. Beneath the deck, which is made of short boards that can easily be taken up, there is room for stowing food and weapons, and clothes and fresh water, and ropes and other things which the crew need.

Along each side of the ship there are sixteen benches fitted one behind the other like desks in a schoolroom, each big enough to seat two or three men. These are for the oarsmen to sit on while they pull the sixteen long oars, which pass through sixteen *rowlocks*, that is, little holes cut in the *main-strake* or chief board on each side of the ship.

She is lower in the waist or amidships than at the bows and stern, so that the rowers being nearer the water can use their oars better. In those days, before steam-engines were known, even big ships like this had to use oars when there was a calm or a bad wind. She has one large mast with a square

70 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

sail, and she is steered by a rudder something like a large oar fixed to one side of the stern.

ea'-si-ly	built	oak'-en	shal'-low-ness
shields	weap'-ons	clothes	oars'-men
row'-locks	waist	en'-gines	calm
square	steer'-ed	drag'-on	bul'-warks

LESSON 24.

What the War-Ship looked like.—At her bows is a fine figure-head, carved and painted with the fierce jaws of a snake or dragon gaping towards the enemy. On either side there is a row of shields, behind which the men who are rowing are safe from the splashing of the sea, or the arrows and spears of their enemies. The figure-head is gilt, the shields are painted black and red and yellow.

The hull of the ship is tarred black, and round her bulwarks are streaks of red and yellow. Her sail is striped red and white and green, so that she looks very gay and bright. If you had seen her when the men were rowing her thirty-two oars, and the sun shining upon her gilded figure-head, you would have thought her some winged dragon swimming along over the sea.

Her Crew.—The crew on board her were fifty or sixty picked men, and they were bound to be good sailors. For in the North Sea there are often dreadful storms, when it needs bold hearts and skilled hands to save a ship from being overwhelmed by the heavy waves, or driven ashore and wrecked upon the sharp rocks or shallow sands of the coast.

They were good soldiers too, and held to their boast that they would never turn their backs before twice their own number. Well drilled and quick, too, they were to obey their captain, whether he bade them drive off an enemy by shooting arrows or flinging spears, or called them to follow him, sword in hand, into the midst of the fray.

Yet with all their bravery and skill they were often cruel and pitiless. They had learnt to be true to their friends, and to die rather than show a faint heart. But they had not learnt that it is wicked to fight, save in a good cause, such as to shelter the weak against the strong, or to uphold the right, or to defend oneself against evildoers.

Yet these Northmen and Danes were not mere savages like *bushmen* or *Australian blacks*. They were in many ways men of sense and wisdom, honest and hard-working and truthful

and warm-hearted. And it was always their pride to do their duty as far as they knew it.

King Guthrum and his Vow.—You shall have a story about one of these Danish sea-kings who had led men to England, and fought with our English kings. He won from Alfred part of the land for himself, and gained much riches, and made a great name as a brave and lucky leader. His name was Guthrum. He had married an English wife, a wise and good woman, who is still remembered in Denmark. In his old age King Guthrum sat at home in his hall, while his sons went to war. His eldest son was a fine young man, and the old king loved him so dearly, that he vowed he would slay the man who brought him news of any evil having befallen him. However, sad to tell, this young prince and his brother fell out and fought, and the elder was slain by his enemies.

fierce	drag'-on	bul'-warks	gap'-ing
streak	dread'-ful	over-whelm'-ed	wreck'-ed
fray	brav'-er-y	pit'-i-less	friends
e-vil-do'-ers	vow'-ed	re-mem'-ber-ed	be-fall'-en

Figure-head : The figure of a bird, animal, human being, &c., which is fixed at the bows of a ship.

Bulwarks : The sides of a ship above the deck.

LESSON 25.

The Queen's Wisdom.—A messenger came home to King Guthrum's palace and told the queen what had happened, for he was afraid to speak the evil tidings to the king because of his oath. So the queen planned a way of letting her husband know about it.

She rose up early in the morning, and had the large hall where the king used to sit hung about with dark cloth, instead of the bright hangings that were wont to deck the walls. Then she sat down on her great carved chair by the side of the king's seat, and waited sorrowfully enough till the king should come in. By-and-by Guthrum walked into the hall, and when he saw the walls draped with black, and the mournful faces of the queen and the nobles, he said, 'Is there any news?'

The King hears the News.—Then the queen stood up and spoke: 'My Lord, you had two hawks, one white, the other grey. They were both handsome and bold and fearless. They were swift on the wing, and they never missed their prey. And it was a joy to

you to see them hunt and strike their quarry. But they both flew away from you. The white hawk flew off into the wilderness, and there came a flock of crows against him. And they set upon him and plucked out his feathers, and mangled him so that he fell and died. But as for the grey hawk, he is come home again to you to kill birds for your table!'

The King's pitiful Death.—The old king understood what had happened, and he said, 'Denmark is drooping; my son must be dead?' And the queen answered him, 'You have said what no one would have dared to tell you, and it is true.' Then the old man sank down in the king's seat exceeding sorrowful. He could neither move nor speak for grief, nor was there any that could comfort him. And so sore was his sorrow that on the next day, at the same hour that he had heard the news, he died there in the hall, sitting in his chair.

King Eric and the Poet Egil.—There was a king of the Northmen named Eric, who ruled for some years at York. He had a wife named Gund-hild, a fair woman and one of good understanding. But she was not loved as Thora, Guthrum's wife, had been, for she

was so cruel and crafty that folks thought she must be a witch.

There was also an Icelfander, a poet named Egil, who had had dealings with King Eric and Queen Gund-hild some years before. But they had parted ill-friends and there was deadly hate between him and them.

Now on a time this Egil was minded to go to Winchester to visit the King of England, who was always kind and open-handed to him.

It was late in the year when he set sail from Iceland, and he met with foul winds and heavy weather. And at last after a long and stormy voyage, he was glad to run his ship ashore on the first inlet he could find on the English coast, rather than risk keeping at sea any longer. He was lucky enough to get safe to land with his crew and most of his cargo: but he could not save his ship, which was broken up by the heavy waves.

mess'-en-ger	pal'-ace	hap'-pen-ed	plan'-ned
sor'-row-ful-ly	mourn'-ful	drape'-d	quar'-ry
prey	feath'-ers	man'-gle-d	ex-ceed'-ing
craft'-y	po'-et	car'-go	reign'-ing
voy'-age	witch	in'-stead'	no'-bles

Winchester: A town in Hants—formerly the home of the English kings.

Quarry: The prey of a hawk.

LESSON 26.

Egil rides to York to his Friend.—Now when Egil was able to get the news from the people on the shore, he found that the place he had come to was but a few miles from York, and that King Eric and Queen Gund-hild were reigning there. So he feared greatly for his life. Only one thing gave him hope, that he was told that a wise and true kinsman of his, named Arin-beorn, was also at York and in high favour with Eric.

So he thought the best thing would be to go at once and see Arin-beorn, and ask him for his help, before the news of his shipwreck could reach the angry king and queen. So he cast a hooded cloak over his head and body, hiding his fine helmet ; and took his sharpest spear, his keenest sword, and his stoutest shield, and rode off alone to York.

When he reached the city it was getting dark, and there were not many people about the streets, for most folks were at home over their suppers.

Egil and his Friend go to Eric.—Egil found Arin-beorn's house and leapt off his horse at the gate, and asked the porter if he was

within. 'He is at meat.' 'Then go in, my man, and ask him whether he would rather talk to Egil indoors or out.' The man went in to his master: 'There is a fellow as big as a giant standing at the door, who bade me ask thee whether thou wouldst rather talk to Egil indoors or out.' 'Bid him wait outside,' said Arin-beorn, 'he shall not wait long.' And Arin-beorn finished his supper quickly, and came out to the gate to his friend.

Egil told his story. 'Hast thou met any man in the town who could have known thee?' asked Arin-beorn. 'None,' answered Egil. 'Then we will go to the king at once.' So he called to ten of his best men to take their weapons and follow him and Egil. He told them when they came to the king's hall to go in one by one behind him, and Egil was to walk last: 'But when I turn do you each turn at once and follow Egil out.' For he was afraid the king might bid his guard lay hands on Egil, and he wished to save his friend at all hazards. He also warned Egil not to speak, but to leave him to plead his cause.

When they reached the king's house the door-keepers knew Arin-beorn and let them in without ado.

How the King received Egil.—The king

and queen were sitting in their great carved chairs side by side, and their nobles and gentlemen beside them, and the wine was on the tables.

Arin-beorn went up to the king and greeted him, and Eric welcomed him and asked him what had brought him so late. Said Arin-beorn, 'I have brought you a man that has come a long way to see you and seek forgiveness of you. And it is surely a high honour for you, my lord, that your enemies should come out of far-off lands to beg peace from you, feeling that they cannot bear your anger though they live so many leagues away. And I pray you treat him as a king should.'

Eric looked over the heads of Arin-beorn and his followers, and saw a tall gaunt man standing near the door, and he knew him at once, and bent his eyes fiercely upon him, and called out angrily, 'How hast thou dared to come before me, Egil? When last we parted there was such a score of ill against thee, that thou couldest scarce hope to save thy life if we met again.'

ship'-wreck	hood'-ed	helm'-et	keen'-est
leagues	folks	fin'-ish-ed	hon'-our
haz'-ard	plead	wel'-come-d	greet'-ed
gaunt	fierce'-ly	ang'-ri-ly	warn'-ed

LESSON 27.

The Queen's Anger.—Egil did not answer, but ran forward and knelt down at Eric's feet and clasped his knees, and bowed his head before him, as a token that he put himself at the king's mercy.

The king looked at him without speaking, but the queen cried out, 'Why not slay him at once? Has he not murdered your kinsmen and made a mocking song upon yourself? Was ever king so braved before?'

But Arin-beorn was ready with his answer: 'If he have spoken ill of the king, he may make amends by composing a song of praise on him which shall endure for ever.'

Gund-hild said: 'We will not listen to his song. Bid them take him out of the hall, Eric, and kill him at once!'

Again Arin-beorn answered her: 'The king must not be led by your words, lady, to do what is unkingly. The law says to put a man to death at night is a murderer's deed.'

Now Eric spoke: 'Egil shall not be killed to-night. Have him home with thee, Arin-beorn, and bring him back in the morning,

that I may deal with him then as shall seem right to me.'

Egil makes his Poem.—Arin-beorn took Egil back to his house, and brought him into an upper chamber and set meat and drink before him, and said: 'I can clearly see that the queen will do her best to take thy life, but as for Eric, though he was so angry at first, his mood was softer when we left. I should like you to make a fine Song of Praise on him to-night, so as to be able to repeat it to him to-morrow.'

Egil said: 'I will do as you think best, but Eric is the last man I ever thought to praise.'

So Arin-beorn left him alone to make his poem, and when it was midnight he came back and asked Egil how he was getting on.

'Not well,' answered he, 'there is a bird over my window that keeps chattering and twittering so loudly and so long, that I cannot put my thoughts together for the noise.'

Then Arin-beorn went up to the loft above and drove the bird away, and sat there on the watch till morning, so that Egil might be quiet while he made his poem. And people said afterwards that this bird was the wicked Gund-hild, who had put on this shape by her

witchcraft, in order to prevent Egil in this way from making the verses that were to save his life. By sunrise Egil had finished his poem and got it by heart.

an'-swer	for'-ward	clasp'-ed	knees
mer'-cy	mur'-der-ed	a-mends'	com-pos'-ing
list'-en	mood	soft'-en	mid -night
po'-em	chat'-ter-ing	twit'-ter-ing	witch'-craft

LESSON 28.

Arin-beorn pleads for Egil.—After breakfast Arin-beorn took him again before the king, and said: ‘My lord, here is your prisoner, he has not tried to run away. And I hope you will listen to me. I have left my kith and kin and land and goods in Norway, and followed you here over-sea when all men forsook you, and in every way have always done my utmost to serve you. Of course I know that this was but my duty, and that you have done me many a kindness, but still——’

Here Gund-hild broke in, ‘Enough of this, Arin-beorn, you have served the king well and been well rewarded. But certainly you

ought to prefer the king to this man. And you have no right to expect the king to forgive an evildoer.'

Arin-beorn then said: 'If you do as the queen wishes, at least, my lord, give Egil a week's freedom, that he may have a chance of saving his life.'

'No, no,' cried the queen, 'he would be in Winchester by that time, safe with the King of England. It is quite clear, Arin-beorn, that you care less for the king's honour than for your friend's life.'

'How will it heighten the king's honour, lady, to kill a man who put himself in his power? And now I will say no more but this—that if the king will kill Egil, he must first kill me and all my men. Yet I never thought, my lord, that you would rather see me dead on the ground, than spare a man's life for my sake.'

Now Eric himself spoke: 'You go too far, Arin-beorn! I am loth to hurt you, though I have good reason to punish this man to the utmost.'

Egil is forgiven.—And when he heard those words Egil made haste and stepped up to Arin-beorn's side, and, praying for a hearing, began to repeat in a loud clear voice

the poem he had made in praise of King Eric.



EGIL RECITING HIS POEM TO KING ERIC.

Every one kept silence, for it was known that Egil was a good poet, and men wanted to hear him. The king sat bolt upright in his

big chair, with his bright, fierce eyes fixed on Egil's face till the poem was finished, then he said: 'A fine poem, and well delivered; and I have now made up my mind about Egil. For your sake, Arin-beorn, though you spoke too boldly, and because I would not be too hard on a man that put himself in my power, he shall go free. But I warn thee, Egil, never to come into my sight again, or thou shalt surely die.'

So Egil's life was saved by his good poem which he called *Head-Ransom*, and by his friend's wise advice.

You may be sure that Egil was grateful to Arin-beorn, and when he got back to Iceland, the first thing he did was to make a finer poem in his praise than he had made for King Eric. And he sent a man to England to sing it to him, for he could not come himself. And in this poem he speaks of Arin-beorn's courage and faithfulness and truth, and laughs over his own ugliness as he tells how Eric forgave him for the sake of his song.

Men did not deem it high at all
The fee I gained in Eric's hall—
A skull is what I got for pay,
Half bald it was and half wolf-grey,
A pair of eyes set dark and deep
'Neath jutting brows both broad and steep,

The big mouth, too, that sung the Lay
Head-Ransom to the king that day,
 A tongue and set of teeth beside
 A pair of ears that stretch so wide,
 But though men think these no great fee,
 They're worth far more than gold to me.

break'-fast	pris'-on-er	kith	fol'-low-ed
for sook'	re-ward'-ed	cert'-ain-ly	pre-fer'
ought	height'-en	step'-ped	sl'-lence
de-liv'-er-ed	ad-vice'	ug'-li-ness	cour'-age

Kith and Kin: Countrymen and family.

LESSON 29.

King Have-lock.—There was a king living in the days of Eric and Egil, whose name was Have-lock, whose life was full of adventures, so that, long after his death, poets sang of him and his deeds.

It is said that he was the son of a good king, who died while he was yet a child, leaving him and his two sisters to the care of his steward, who, he believed, would cherish them as if they were his own children.

But the steward was a bad man, and he wished to make himself king. So he shut up the three poor children and gave them little

to eat and little to drink, and took no care of them. And after a few days, when he had got the rule of the kingdom into his own hands, he went to the room where they were, and killed the two girls with his own hand.

But the little Have-lock who was just old enough to speak, pleaded so hard for his life that he could not find it in his heart to kill him himself. So he sent for a fisherman, named Grim, who was one of his slaves, and bade him take the boy away and drown him that night in the sea, promising to make him free if he did as he bade him.

The fisherman was afraid to say no, so he tied the boy's hands and feet tightly with a piece of fishing-line, and put a gag of a roll of rags in his mouth, so that he could not speak or cry out. Then he threw him into a bag and carried him off to his cottage. When he got home he told his wife what the steward had said to him ; and casting the bag into a corner, ate his supper and went to bed.

Grim and Have-lock.—About midnight, when the moon was shining brightly, Grim got up to put to sea with the boy ; but when he went to take up the boy, he discovered by a mark that was on his shoulder, that he was the son of the late king.

He was much shocked at this, for he was not a bad man, and he had only promised to drown the lad because he was afraid of the steward's anger. For as he was a slave, the steward might have killed him and all his family if he had disobeyed him.

So he loosed poor Have-lock, and told him how sorry he was for the wickedness he had been going to do, and his wife brought the poor child the best food they had, and you may be sure little Have-lock was glad to get rid of his bonds and to eat something, for he had been half-starved by the bad steward.

When he had had a good meal, Grim's wife put him safely to bed, and Grim went out to make ready his big boat for sea.

Grim and Have-lock come to England.—Grim had made up his mind to save the lad, and the only way he could think of was to take him out of the land. So he fitted out his boat, mended her and rigged her and put meat and meal and water on board of her. And in the morning he went to his neighbours and sold his pig and his goat and his cow, and packed up the few clothes he and his wife had.

Before three days were gone, Grim and his wife and their children and the little Have-lock

were in the big boat far out at sea, safe from the wicked steward. They had fair wind and fine weather, and in a few days Grim sighted land to the west, and steering towards it they landed in England near the spot on which Egil was afterwards wrecked.

The place where Grim came ashore and built a little hut of turf and timber, is now a big town. But it still bears his name and is called Grims-by. And upon the old seal of Grims-by town are still to be seen carved the likenesses of Grim and Have-lock.

ad-vent'-ures	deeds	stew'-ard	be-lieve'-d
cher'-ish	plead'-ed	prom'-is-ing	cot'-tage
dis-cov'-er-ed	shoul'-der	timb'-er	neigh'-bour
clothes	child'-ren	wreck'-ed	turf

Grimsby: A fishing-town on the north coast of Lincolnshire.

LESSON 30.

Have-lock's Life with Grim.—For a while all went well. Grim and his wife were hard-working thrifty folk. There was plenty of fish on the coast—salmon and turbot, cod-fish and ling, herring and halibut, thorn-backs and

mackerel, plaice and gurnard, conger-eels and sturgeon, and even porpoises and seals, which were thought very good eating in those days.

Grim made four *creels* or fish-baskets of osier twigs, and put into them the fish he caught in his nets and on his lines. And he and his three sons used to take their creels round on their backs, to the neighbouring villages and gentlefolks' houses, and sell their fish, and buy flour and bacon and beans with the money they got.

But when they caught lampreys, which were then thought the best of all fish for food, they would sell them at Lincoln, and buy cakes and fresh meat, or get hemp to make new lines of, and cord for netting fishing nets.

Have-lock works for his Living.—When Have-lock grew big, he did not like to sit idle at home and see other people work for him. So he made himself a big creel, and as he was both tall and strong for his age, he would load his creel with as much fish as his foster-brothers could carry in their three baskets together. He also helped his foster-father and brothers at the fishing, for he was bright and quick and helpful as well as strong.

But at last bad times came—the corn did not ripen, the hay was spoilt by the rain, the

fish did not come to the coast. So Have-lock, not wishing to be a burden to his good foster-father and mother, who had left their own land to save his life, made up his mind to go out into the world and earn his own living. Grim's wife made him a coat out of an old sail, and he set off bare-footed and bare-headed to Lincoln to try and find work.

Have-lock goes out to Service.—At Lincoln, Have-lock walked into the market. And while he stood there watching the people buying and selling, there came the cook of a rich earl who lived in the town, and bought much fish and meat for his master's dinner. And when he wanted a porter to carry the food up to the earl's house, Have-lock offered himself for the job.

The cook saw that he was a bright-looking strong lad, so he let him take it. But he was surprised to see how easily he took up his heavy load and trudged off with it.

When they reached the earl's house he paid him well, and gave him a hearty meal into the bargain, for he found out that the poor lad had had nothing to eat for two days. Next morning he hired him again, and at the end of the week he asked him if he would like to be a servant under him, in the earl's kitchen.

‘Yes,’ said Have-lock, ‘and you will find me useful, I hope; I was brought up in a poor fisherman’s cottage. I can fetch and carry and chop firewood, and make up a fire, and dress fish and meat, and wash the dishes.’

So the king’s son became a servant—and a good servant he was, willing, helpful, and trusty, and always cheery and blithe. And all the other servants soon grew to like him. And the children would be always wanting to play with him, for he was kindly and good-natured to all. The cook bought him a warm cloth coat and hood, and shoes and stockings. And when he put them on, the other servants wondered at his good looks, for he was fair of face, big-limbed and taller by the head than anyone else in the household. He told no one his true name or story, but was called *Cuar-an*, which means *Sandal*; but why he took this name the old story does not say.

thrift'-y	sal'-mon	tur'-bot	her'-ring
hal'-i-but	mack'-er-el	plaice	gurn'-ard
con-ger-eels'	stur'-geon	por'-poise	o'-si-er
creel	neigh'-bour-ing	vill'-ages	ba'-con
lamp'-reys	bur'-den	bar'-gain	help'-ful
cheer'-y	blithe	serv'-ants	bought
mark'-et	good-nat'-ur-ed	sand'-al	kitch'-en

LESSON 31.

Have-lock shows his Strength.—One day there was a merry-making at Lincoln and sports in the town meadow, wrestling and putting the stone, and other feats of strength. The country folk, plowmen and hedgers and carters, had come in from the villages round, many of them stout fellows enough. And many of the gentlefolks had brought their strongest grooms and porters to try and win the prize. The townsmen were all there, many strong lads from the market and the mills. So there was no lack of champions striving each to outdo the rest.

Of course the earl's servants were there looking on. And when the cook had seen several strong men putting the stone, he called to Have-lock and bade him show what he could do. So to please him Have-lock went forward, and took up the big stone in his turn, and hurled it from the mark with such strength, that it fell full twelve paces further than any one else had ever been able to cast it.

When the others saw how easily he seemed to have done this great feat, they would not even try to cast the stone again, but gave him

the prize at once. And there was so much talk of Cuar-an's mighty strength that it came to the earl's ears at last.

Have-lock and the crafty Earl.—Now this earl had an orphan niece, named Gold-borg, under his care as his *ward*. He had sworn an oath to her dead mother, his sister, that he would bring the girl up well till she was old enough, and then marry her to the best man he could find.

But he was cunning and greedy, and he had longed for years to get the poor girl's lands for himself and his own children, though he dared not break his oath. But now he bethought him of a way by which he might both keep his oath and gain his ends. This was to marry her to Cuar-an, whom he believed to be a slave, for Have-lock had told no man in England of his rank and birth, and passed everywhere as Cuar-an, a slave's son.

It was then the law, that if a free-woman married a slave she would lose her freedom, and her lands would go to the next-of-kin.

Accordingly the earl sent for Cuar-an, and he came into the hall and stood before the table where the earl and his friends were sitting.

‘Men say that you, Cuar-an, are the best

and strongest young man in Lincoln,' said the earl; 'is not this true?' And the guests and servants said it was so, but Have-lock did not answer. 'Then because of my oath,' the earl went on, 'I must marry you to-morrow to my niece, Gold-borg.'

'How can I keep a wife?' said Have-lock, 'I have no money, no house, the very clothes I have on are not mine.'

'What do I care for that?' said the earl, 'you shall obey me and marry her to-morrow or I will hang you at my gate.' So Have-lock promised to do his will.

They that sat by thought it shameful of the earl to marry his niece, a king's daughter, to a slave, and cheat her out of her lands and her kingdom. But they said nothing, for they feared the earl's wrath. As for poor Gold-borg, she was obliged to do as her uncle bade her, for she knew that if she disobeyed him he might find another trick, and perhaps a worse one, to get her out of the way.

mead'-ow	wrest'-ling	strength	folk
feats	hedg'-ers	vill'-ages	fell'-ows
grooms	mark'-et	cham'-pi-ons	sev'-er-al
or'-phan	niece	oath	cun'-ning
greed'-y	be-thought'	be-lieve'-d	ac-cord'-ing-ly
an'-swer	shame'-ful	dis-o-bey'-ed	o-blige'-d

LESSON 32.

Have-lock marries a King's Daughter.—At noon on the morrow, Cuar-an and Gold-borg were married by the bishop in the great church of Lin-coln. And all the folks were sorry that Gold-borg should lose her lands, but said that they had never seen a handsomer pair wedded.

When the wedding was over, and the merry-making had begun, Have-lock stole quietly away, borrowed two swift horses and rode secretly by bye-lanes out of the town with his bride, as fast as he could. For he would not let her be mocked for marrying a slave, and he dared not yet say who he was, lest the earl should find out he had been outwitted, and kill him and ill-treat Gold-borg.

Ere long the bride and bridegroom reached the little turf cottage where Grim and his children lived. They welcomed Have-lock, and did their best to set Gold-borg at ease, for as you may suppose, she was much cast down when she found herself married, as she thought, to a slave and doomed to pass her life in drudgery and slavery.

But Have-lock was so courteous to her

that she could not help loving him. And that night Have-lock told her who he was.

Have-lock goes back to his own Land.—You may be sure that poor Gold-börg was glad to know that she was still a free-woman, and she begged Grim and his sons to take her and her husband over-sea to Have-lock's own land. 'For so we shall be safe from the earl, my uncle. And who knows but you may be able to win back your rights, and punish the wicked steward who killed your little sisters, and tried to murder you?'

Her words pleased them all, and Grim at once got his boat ready. In a few days they had crossed the sea, and landed at the chief town of the kingdom, that had belonged to Have-lock's father.

They heard that the false steward was still king, but the town itself was ruled by a nobleman, named Ubba, a good and just man.

To him they went, giving out that they were merchants from England, and asked leave to stay a while and trade with the townsfolk. Ubba received them kindly and gave them lodgings at the house of one of his followers, in the outskirts of the town. Thither they went and took up their abode.

How Have-lock beat the Robbers.—Now

there was a gang of robbers in the town, who heard of the English merchants being lodged at this house, and thought to rob them of their goods. So at night they beset the house, and battered in the panels of the big outer door with great stones.

But Have-lock caught up the oaken bar that went across inside from door-post to door-post, and dashed out among them, laying about him so lustily, that they ran out of his way like beaten hounds. But when they saw that he was alone, they came at him, and though he struck down every man he could reach with his huge bar, the rest cast stones and spears at him from a distance and wounded him.

But the noise soon roused his foster-brothers and old Grim, and they rushed to his rescue. One snatched up an oar, another a net-staff, a third an axe, and so forth. And with these weapons they fell upon the cowardly robbers so fiercely, that they could not get away. And in a short while they had killed most of them, and wounded the rest so badly, that they lay helpless and senseless on the ground.

Have lock tells his Story to Ubba.—When Grim and his sons turned back to the house

98. OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

after they had worsted the robbers, they found that Have-lock had been badly hurt.



HAVE-LOCK AND THE ROBBERS.

So one of them went to Ubba to tell him what had just happened, and to ask him to send a doctor. Ubba was angry at the robbers' bold-

ness, and sent men at once to take prisoners all of them that were yet alive.

As for Have-lock, he took him and Goldborg his wife into his own house, where he had him tended as if he had been his own brother, for he had taken a liking to him as soon as he first saw him.

When Have-lock was healed, he told Ubba his whole story, and asked him to help him to win back the kingdom that was his by right, and to punish the false steward.

Ubba was glad to know that his rightful king was come, and he sent to gather all the freemen in the country round. When they were come together he led Have-lock into the midst of them, told them who he was and promised to lead them against the false king.

bish'-op	qui'-et-ly	bor'-row-ed	se'-cret-ly
mar'-ry-ing	out-wit'-ted	bride'-groom	turf
cot'-tage	wel'-come-d	drudg'-er-y	court'-e-ous
doom'-ed	stew'-ard	merch'-ant	re-ceive'-d
lodg'-ings	pan'-els	oak'-en	huge
weap'-ons	cow'-ard-ly	fierce'-ly	wound'-ed

Net-Staff : A strong pole to which the fishing-net was fastened

LESSON 33.

Have-lock wins back his Father's Kingdom.—All those that were there were pleased with Have-lock's looks and speech, and gladly chose him for their king.

Then they went forth against the false king, who was taken prisoner after a battle, and put to death for the murder of Have-lock's little sisters.

And Have-lock was crowned, and the first thing he did afterwards was to take a fleet to England, to see if he could get back his wife's heritage from the earl, her uncle. The earl would not give up the land peacefully, but came forth to fight. Have-lock took him prisoner with his own hand, and had him tried and punished as he deserved. And the English of that part of the country were glad to take Gold-borg and Have-lock as their rulers in his stead.

And now for a time Have-lock's troubles were over. He lived a long life and became a famous king. In the old histories much is told of his wars, and his doings by sea and land, and how he became a Christian, and died full of years and honours, and was buried

in the Island of Columba, a place which you may read something about further on in this book.

The bad King Ethelred.—After the time of Alfred and Guthrum, the Danes and Northmen who had settled in England became Christians, and lived in peace and quiet. And no more heathen Danes came to trouble England for about sixty years.

But at last, in the days of King Ethelred, sea-rovers began again to come here from Denmark, and plunder the land as the others had done before.

Ethelred was a selfish, cruel, and foolish man, who only cared for his own ease and pleasures, and left the rule of his realm to wicked men who had won their way to his favour. So that the land was not rightly guarded, and the sea-rovers were able to sail round the coasts and land where they liked, without fear of the English fleet or army.

The Suffering of the English.—Sometimes, indeed, the king would gather a fleet against them, but when the ships and men were all ready, he would idle away the time till it was too late to do anything.

Afterwards, when the Danes had done all the harm they could, he would pay them large

102 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

sums of money to go away. So that, what with the damage they underwent from the Danes, and the heavy taxes they had to pay the king, the poor English were in a sad plight.

Many people were killed, many were taken prisoners and sold as slaves, many lost all they had. They saw their houses, barns, and shops sacked and burnt, and their horses driven away and cattle and sheep slaughtered to feed their foes. All their gold and silver and jewels too were carried off as booty. There was hardly a place in England, that was not overrun and plundered during the reign of Ethelred.

pun'-ish	false	stew'-ard	right'-ful
speech	prom'-is-ed	her'-it-age	mur'-der
un'-cle	peace'-ful-ly	trou'-bles	war'-ri-or
hist'-or-ies	fur'-ther	plun'-der	self'-ish
cru'-el	realm	guard'-ed	plight
slaugh'-ter-ed	jew'-els	boot'-y	over-run'

Island of Columba : Now called I-colum-kill or Iona. It lies on the west coast of Scotland.

LESSON 34.

King Anlaf in Ireland.—Among the chief captains of the hosts of the North-men, the

best of all was King Anlaf. He was the strongest and handsomest man of the day, and he was brave and wise and truthful, and he is better worth reading of than the weak and wretched Ethelred.

He and his men were once sailing off the Irish coast when they ran short of meat. So they landed and marched into the country, taking all the sheep and cattle they could find.

When they had got together a great herd, they hastened back to their ships, meaning to sail away with their spoil, before the Irishmen could gather in arms to attack them. As they were on the road to the shore, there came a farmer to King Anlaf begging him to give him back his cows. Anlaf was sorry for the man, though he was his enemy, and he told him that he might have his cows if he could pick them out of the herd. 'But,' said he, 'you must not delay us on our way.'

King Anlaf gets his famous Dog.—The farmer had a big dog with him, and he at once turned it into the drove. The dog ran through the whole herd, in which there were many hundred head of cattle, and soon drove out of it just the number of cows which the farmer had told the king he owned. And all of them were marked in the self-same

way, so it was very clear that the dog must have picked out the right beasts.

The king and his men wondered at the



DOG STEERING.

dog's wisdom, and Anlaf asked the farmer if he would give him the dog. 'Willingly,' answered he. Whereon the king gave him a

gold ring in return for his gift, and promised to befriend him if ever he stood in need of his help. The dog's name was Soldier, and the king kept him always with him as long as he lived.

The Dog steers the King's Ship.—One day Anlaf was steering his famous ship, the *Long Serpent*, and Soldier was lying at his feet, watching him as if he understood everything that his master was doing. One of the king's followers, a good poet, was standing by.

'Come, poet,' said Anlaf, 'and take your turn at the helm.'

'I can't steer, sir,' answered he.

'Then you must find some one to steer for you while you make a verse. Whom do you choose?'

'Well, I think your dog, Soldier, could steer quite as well as I can.'

'We will try him,' said the king; 'but you must be quick over your verse, for he has not been used to such work, and the wind is blowing hard.'

Then Anlaf made the dog stand up and put his feet on the tiller, as if he were steering, but he himself took up a huge oar or sweep, and steered the ship with that, while

106 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

the poet was making his verse. And this is what he made—

The smooth-bladed oar is tugged through the water,
While the rudder is swaying to and fro in the foam;
For the king's at the oar, and his hound is the helmsman;
As through the cold ocean the *Serpent* swims home.

When the sailors heard that the dog, Soldier, had been steering the great ship, they made merry over it, you may be sure, and said that he could do everything but speak.

capt'-ains	hand'-som-est	truth'-ful	wretch'-ed
hast'-en-ed	at-tack'	de-lay'	cat'-tle
won' der-ed	wis'-dom	will'-ing-ly	be-friend'
al'-ways	fol'-low-ers	po'-et	en'-e-my
steer'-ing	huge	tug'-ged	helms'-man

LESSON 35.

Anlaf's Death.—King Anlaf did not live to grow old. His enemies set upon him at sea with a great fleet, while he had only a few ships with him, for he had not been warned of their coming. After a dreadful battle, when there was not a man aboard the *Serpent* but was wounded or slain, the

king, seeing that the day was lost, threw himself into the sea that he might not come alive into the hands of his foes.

The sailors told how the king's shield was seen floating on the sea for a short while, and they believed that he was swimming with it over his head, trying to reach the coast or some friend's ship. For it was known that Anlaf was a famous swimmer. But no doubt he grew faint with loss of blood and sank in the cold deep water, for he was never seen again, nor was his body ever found.

Soldier's Death.—King Anlaf's foes took the *Serpent*, and sailed back to Norway. But they could not make her sail so fast or steer so well as King Anlaf had done, for they did not know how to handle such a big ship.

When they reached the harbour and the ship was moored to the pier, one of King Anlaf's men went up to Soldier, who ever since the battle began had been lying on the fore-deck waiting for his master's orders. He looked sadly at the dog, and said: 'Ah! Soldier, we have no master now!'

With that the dog sprang up, howling and whining as if he had been struck to the heart, and ran ashore. He climbed to the top of a high mound looking over the sea, and

there he lay down. Food and water were brought to him, but he would not touch them, though he drove away the birds and beasts that came to steal them. And there he lay with the tears rolling down his face as he wept for his master, till, in a few days, he died.

The Merciful Captain.—When Anlaf made peace with King Ethelred, he went away from England, because he had promised never to make war upon Englishmen again. But King Swain, the Dane, who had been with him did not make any promise. Indeed, he went on fighting against Ethelred till he drove him out of the land, and won the crown for himself.

In these wars many evil deeds were done on either side, for there were few men in those days who showed pity or mercy to their foes. But among Swain's captains there was a man named Thorwald, who was more merciful and righteous than any soldier of his day. He was so well liked by his comrades that, when they brought home their booty from the wars, they would give him anything he chose out of it. But he would never take the silver or gold, or rich raiment or arms, but would ask them for one or two of their prisoners. And these he would set free, sending them

home to their friends without any ransom or reward, instead of selling them as slaves.

en'-em-ies	warn'-ed	wound'-ed	shield
fa'-mous	dread'-ful	a-board'	threw
har'-bour	ly'-ing	fore'-deck	howl'-ing
whin'-ing	climb'-ed	mer'-ci-ful	right'-eous
oom'-rades	rai'-ment	ran'-som	re-ward'

LESSON 36.

Thorwald's Trustiness.—When Swain was still a young captain, before he became King of England, it is told that he and Thorwald landed in Wales, and marched up into the country; but the Welshmen came against them and cut them off from their followers, and took them both prisoners.

All night they lay in a dungeon in no happy plight, but early next day there came thither a Welsh nobleman, who called for Thorwald to be brought out to him.

'Thorwald,' said he, 'when your soldiers took my son captive, you set him free and sent him home safe to me. I am glad to be able to make a return for your kindness. Your ransom is paid, and you are free.'

'My lord,' said Thorwald, 'I thank you

heartily for your good-will, but I cannot go away, leaving my comrade, Swain, in bonds. But if you will pay his ransom, I will gladly bear all the cost thereof.'

Then, for Thorwald's sake, the nobleman had Swain also taken out of prison, and sent them both back together to their countrymen.

Swain's Gratitude.—Years afterwards, when Swain was a great king and was sitting with two other princes at a feast, one of them said to him, 'It is not often that three such guests as we are meet at one table!'

'No,' answered Swain, 'but if we were to reckon only those great who are worthy, I know a poor gentleman's son who is worth us three kings together.'

'What is the name of this wonderful man?' they asked. Whereon Swain told them the story of Thorwald and of his kindliness to himself. And he bore witness to his noble heart, saying that 'he was as brave as the boldest soldier, as generous and courteous as the greatest king, and as good and wise as the most learned sage!'

The old books have more to tell of Thorwald, and bear out what the king said. They set forth how he preached the Gospel to his heathen fellow-countrymen, and many other

things too long to set down here. After a life of travel, he died in a strange land, away from his own kith and kin, and a poet brought home the news in this verse—

Christ has given Thorwald rest. I have seen where he
is laid.

By St. John's Church, near the altar, far in Dram, his
grave was made.

The Sack of Canterbury.—In the days when Swain and his son, Canute, were trying to win England from Ethelred, Thurkell the Tall came up the Thames from over the North Sea, with a fleet of ships to join them in fighting against the English, and to gain what he could for himself.

He and his men moored their ships and landed, and made a camp on the shore, and then took horses from the farms near, and rode all over the country-side plundering and burning.

Not a few of the English took shelter in the town of Canterbury, and the Danes were not able for a long time to break into it, for it was strongly walled, and there were many stout-hearted men inside who could guard it. But at last a wicked traitor betrayed it to Thurkell and his host, and they broke in.

112 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

Many poor people were killed and every house was sacked.

fol'-low-ers	pris'-on-er	dun'-ge-on	plight
thith'-er	capt'-ive	ran'-som	heart'-i-ly
guest	won'-der-ful	kind'-li-ness	gen'-er-ous
court'-e-ous	sage	heath'-en	moor'-ed
trait'-or	be-tray'-ed	sack'-ed	kith

LESSON 37.

The Archbishop taken Prisoner.—When the Danes had stayed in the town long enough to search it thoroughly, they marched back to their ships, carrying with them the archbishop and all the clergy and gentlefolk as prisoners, and hundreds of the poorer townsfolk and farmers.

Great was the sorrow of Englishmen when they heard the news. They remembered that it was at Canterbury, that the Roman clergymen had first preached the Gospel to their fathers, and they were sorely grieved to hear that the good archbishop was taken. One of them made these lines about it :—

In bonds is he that till to-day had been
 Head of the English Church and English folk ;
 And one might see the very depths of woe,
 Where joy was wont to be, in that poor town,

Whence first there came to us the Law of Christ,
And bliss for this world and the world to come.

Many of the prisoners found friends to buy them back, but those who could get no one to redeem them, were sold as slaves to France and other lands over-sea.

The Archbishop's Faithfulness.—The Danes thought that the archbishop would be ready to pay for his freedom, and they fixed a large sum, which he promised to get them. But when he found that he could not get the money without taking it from the poor or the churches, he chose to stay in bonds rather than do so.

The Danes kept him with them till Easter week in the next year, when, on Saturday, after a feast, they held a meeting to see what was to be done.

They sent for him and bade him pay the money he had promised them, but he told them why he could not. Said he, 'I am ready without fear to suffer any pain you choose to put me to. That I cannot carry out what I promised you is not for want of will, but because I have not enough money of my own.'

They were very angry when they heard these words and voted that he should die. Then they took up blocks of wood and stones,

and the heads and bones of the oxen they had been feasting on that afternoon, and began to throw them at him.

The Archbishop's Brave Death.—Thurkell, their leader, was sorry for the brave archbishop, and he ran into the midst of them, crying, 'Forbear, forbear! I pray you! Silver and gold and all that I have or can get, save my ship only, I will give you to let this man go free. Do not commit this wickedness!'

However, they were heated with the wine they had been drinking, and would not listen to Thurkell, but went on pelting the helpless old man.

There was one Dane there who had often talked with the archbishop since he had been a prisoner, and who had become a Christian that very morning through his teaching. This man, when he saw he could not save his teacher, thought the best thing he could do would be to put him out of pain at once; he therefore smote him on the head with his axe, so that he fell dead to the ground without a word.

search	thor'-ough-ly	car'-ry-ing	arch'-bish-op
cler'-gy	Sat'-ur-day	pris'-on-ers	towns'-folk
sore'-ly	grieve'-d	depths	free'-dom
choose	midst	com-mit'	pelt'-ing

LESSON 38.

The Archbishop's Burial.—When he was dead, the Danish soldiers were ashamed of the evil deed they had done in their drunken wrath.

Thurkell and the greater part of his followers made up their minds to become Christians, and enter the service of the English king.

The English did not, you may be sure, forget the brave archbishop, who had died rather than do what he thought wrong. His body was buried in St. Paul's Church in London, and there it lay for some time. But, years afterwards, when all was at peace again, the Canterbury people wished to have their archbishop buried in his own city.

The Londoners said they would never give him up ; so that, it is said, the bier had to be taken out of St. Paul's by stealth to prevent a riot. And now the body of the good archbishop lies on the north side of the choir at Canterbury, where you may see his tomb to this day. And on the riverside, on the spot where he fell, there is a church bearing his name.

Ca-nute, King of All England.—The year after the archbishop was killed, Swain became king of England, driving Ethelred out of the land. But he did not live long to rule his new kingdom: and when he was dead, after some months' fighting, all agreed to take Ca-nute as their king.

He was one of the best kings we have ever had in England, although he was not English-born.

He was a wise lawmaker and a careful ruler, and he tried to rule the English as an English king and not as a foreign conqueror. He said that he would never spare himself, or grudge taking care for the needs of all his people. He kept his word and his name has never been forgotten.

Ca-nute at Ely.—Ca-nute was fond of music and singing and poetry, and is said to have made verses himself.

One day he and the queen were being rowed over the fens by the Isle of Ely. The brethren of the abbey there were singing the service in their great church, and the wind wafted the sweet sounds across the water to the king's boat. He stood up and called for silence in the boats, and bade his men row nearer to the isle, that he might hear the

music. And this was long remembered at Ely and verses were made about it:—

The Ely monks sang merrily
As King Ca-nute was rowing by;
'Row, men, to the land more near,
That we the good monks' song may hear!'

Ca-nute did not forget the monks, but made fine gifts to their church, and often went to hear their services.

sold'-i-ers	a-shame'-d	drunk'-en	wrath
wrong	bur'-ied	bier	stealth
ri'-ot	pre-vent'	choir	tomb
a-greed'	care'-ful	for'-eign	con'-quer-or
grudge	for-got'-ten	mu'-sic	po'-et-ry
breth'-ren	waft'-ed	ser'-vic-es	mer'-ri-ly

Isle of Ely: In those times the country now called the Fens was under water, with islands dotted over it, one of which was the Isle of Ely in Cambridgeshire.

LESSON 39.

Ca-nute and Bodge.—One cold morning, February 2, the king was at a village in the fens, and wanted to go to the Isle of Ely. The winter had been hard and the fens were all frozen, and the only way to get to the island

was by sledge. But it was a dangerous drive, for there were places where the ice was rotten



BODGE AND THE KING.

and would not bear the weight of a sledge, and in other spots there were holes and pools.

The king did not know what to do—to

go was to run a great risk, above all if a fog came on, and he did wish to wait.

While he was doubting what was best, a poor labourer, who had got the nickname Bodge because he was so big and stout, stood forward and offered to go before the king's sledge, and find a safe track for him. The king was pleased, and told him to start at once. So off they went, and everybody laughed, and said that where the ice would bear Bodge it would carry any weight.

They reached Ely safely, and then the king called Bodge to him, and, when he found out that he was a *bonds-man* or slave, he set him free with all his family as a reward. And two hundred years after this, there were still people living near Ely who had sprung from Bodge, the king's guide.

Ca-nute and his Poets.—In the days of Ca-nute, and before and after him, as you will have seen by the story of King Eric and Egil, there were poets who made songs of praise to kings and great men, telling of their great deeds, and got from them in return gifts and gold.

For as there were few books and fewer readers in those days, the best way to get a thing remembered, was to make a good poem

120 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

about it, which people would learn by heart and repeat. So that kings were glad to have their deeds put into verse, that their names and acts might be kept in mind when they themselves were dead and gone.

• As Ca-nute was a rich man, and known to be open-handed and free with his money, many poets came to his court. And as he knew something of verse-making himself, he took much pleasure in hearing their verses.

Feb'-ru-ar-y	vill'-age	is'-land	dan'-ger-ous
rot'-ten	weight	doubt'-ing	laugh'-ed
fam'-i-ly	re-ward'	peo'-ple	guide
few'-er	po'-em	mon'-ey	re-mem'-ber-ed

LESSON 40.

The Poet Otter.—Of one such poet, named Otter, it is told that he came to England, and waited at the door of the hall till the king should come back from Evensong to go to supper.

As Ca-nute passed by he caught sight of the poet, standing there in his fine red coat and blue hooded cloak, and he said to them

that were with him : ‘I see a man there who looks like a bold dashing fellow, and I do not think he is an Englishman. Bid him come to me.’

So Otter was sent for, and he walked up the hall, and stopped in front of the table at which the king was sitting with his chief men, and greeted him in verse, crying out—

Thou that of Irish, Danes, and Scots, and English too art
king,
Beyond the very bounds of earth I'll make thy praises
ring!

The Poet's Reward.—Then Otter told the king who he was, and that he had come to bring him a poem which he had made in his honour.

‘Sit down now,’ answered Ca-nute, ‘and eat and drink to-night ; to-morrow I shall hold a high court, and then you can deliver your poem in the hearing of all.’

So a stool was set for Otter opposite the king, and he ate and drank, and was merry that night.

On the morrow, when the people were gathered together, he stood up and asked for a quiet hearing, and then delivered his poem in a loud, clear voice, so that everyone could

hear him. When he had finished it, everyone praised his verses.

The King's Kindness.—King Ca-nute was pleased too, and took off a high fur cap, trimmed with gold beads, which he wore, and, handing it to the keeper of his money, bade him fill it with silver, and give it to Otter.

As the king's cap full of money was handed over men's heads to the poet, part of the money was shaken out of it, and the pieces went rolling about Otter's feet. He stooped to pick them up, but Ca-nute called out: 'Never mind your pennies, leave them to the poor; I will take care you never lack money as long as you will stay with me.' And he took him into his service, and Otter used to repeat his poems in the hall after dinner, while the king and his men sate over their wine, to the great delight of all that heard him.

Ca-nute and his Flatterers.—But though Ca-nute, like many other people, may have enjoyed to hear his great deeds talked of, he was not foolish enough to believe those that flattered him, and he showed his good sense in a very striking way.

He went down to the shore of Southampton

Water, when the tide was just on the turn, and bade one of his wondering servants bring him a chair, and set it on the shingle below high-water mark. When it was brought, Ca-nute sat down, and raising his hand in



CA-NUTE AND HIS COURTIER.

command, shouted to the flowing sea before him : ‘Thou too, ocean, art under my rule, as much as the earth beneath my footstool. No one has ever disobeyed me without feeling my anger. Therefore, heed my words! I forbid thee to flow over my land, or to dare to touch my feet.’

Ca-nute's Lowly Mind.—But the tide crept on inch by inch as it was wont to do, and

124 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

soon the little waves were lapping up on Ca-nute's footstool, and splashing up over the fine shoes and fair robes that he wore.

Then the king stood up and leaped back to the dry ground, and said to his men, who were watching him : ' See how vain and worthless is the power of earthly princes. Indeed there is no ruler of men, however great and mighty he may be thought, that is worthy of the name of king. That name befits only Him, whose ever-lasting laws heaven and earth and all obey.' And from that day forth Ca-nute would never wear his golden crown, but laid it up in a church, in memory of that day, and in honour of God Al-mighty.

caught	po'-et	hood'-ed	greet'-ed
stop'-ped	op'-po-site	gath'-er-ed	de-liv'-er-ed
qui'-et	sha'-ken	pen'-nies	serv'-ice
fool'-ish	be-lieve'	flat'-ter-ed	won'-der-ing
brought	o'-ce-an	foot'-stool	dis-o-bey'-ed

LESSON 41.

The Good Earl of the Orkneys.—The next story is about an earl who ruled long ago over the Orkney and Shetland Islands, which, as you know, lie to the north of Scotland.

He was a man much beloved during his life, and honoured after his death, for he had many of those gifts which people like to see in those that rule them. Blue-eyed and light-haired, of middle height, strong and lithe, skilled in all out-of-door sports, he was also of more learning than was common among gentlefolks in his day.

He was a good speaker too, could make verses easily, and, having travelled much and seen many ups and downs in his life, was an amusing companion. He was courteous to everybody, and of such kindly nature that he was ever ready to do a good turn to anyone that needed help.

He did two things in his life that are still remembered in the Orkneys—*first*, he went a voyage to Pal-es-tine, fighting with the enemies he met with at sea or on land by the way. And this was thought a wonderful feat in those days, when it was difficult and dangerous to travel, for there were no steamships nor railways, and you must remember that sailors of that day had poor charts, and no compass to steer by. There was also great danger from pirates and sea-rovers.

His *second* deed was to set about building the beautiful church of Kirk-wall, which the

Orkney folks are still so proud of. There was a life of this earl written long ago, and in it the following tale is told.

The Poor Fisherman.—One morning in the fishing-season, there was a poor Shet-land fisherman standing on the shore by his boat, waiting to find someone who could help him to row out a-fishing, for alone he could not row his boat and look after the fishing lines too. He was not in a cheerful mood, for the other boats had all started to the fishing-grounds, and he did not know where to find a mate.

As he stood there looking now up and down the shore, and now out to sea where he could see the other boats well on their way, up came a man in a thick, rough, hooded coat, and asked him why he had not gone a-fishing with the others.

‘I can’t get a mate,’ said he.

‘Well, good man, will you take me?’

‘I should like to,’ said the fisherman, ‘but I must have my own share, and a share for the boat, too, in all we catch, for I have a many children at home, and must fend for them as well as I can.’

The man in the rough coat agreed to this, and they pushed the boat out and got on board.

The Fisherman and his Mate.—They set to work at once, for there was no time to lose, and rowed out till they reached the *banks*, or shallow places out at sea, where the fish are to be found. There are strong and dangerous *races*, or *currents*, in the sea in those parts, and there was a great stream running where they stopped and began to fish.

There were eddies, or slack water, too, and they put their boat in the slack water and cast their lines out into the stream. The good-man looked after the lines, and the man in the rough coat sat in the bows of the boat and rowed.

The good-man begged him not to let the boat get into the current: ‘For if we are swept into it, I fear we are done for.’ But the other paid no heed to what he said, and made as if he did not believe in the danger. And ere long he let the boat drift into the current.

crept	lap'-ping	earth'-ly	o-bey'
be-fits'	mem'-or-y	Al-might'-y	be-lov'-ed
hon'-our-ed	blue'-ey-ed	height	lithe
sea-son	trav'-el-led	a-mus'-ing	com-pan'-ion
court'-eous	voy'-age	won'-der-ful	dif'-fi-cult
dan'-ger-ous	rail'-ways	com'-pass	pi'-rates
our'-rents	ed'-dies	be-lieve'	swept

LESSON 42.

What the Man in the Rough Coat did.—

The fisherman was terribly frightened as the boat swept along in the angry waters of the swift current.

‘It was an unlucky day for me,’ cried he, ‘when I took you into my boat, for I shall surely be drowned here, and my children will be left poor and helpless if they lose me.’ And he was so out of heart that he began to weep, for he made sure his last hour was come.

But the man in the rough coat said very quietly: ‘Be easy, good man, and do not weep, for if I put you into the current, I will get you out again.’ And with that he bent to his oars. And as he knew the course of the stream, and was strong and skilful, he soon pulled the boat into still water again.

You may be sure the good-man was not sorry, for he had well-nigh lost all hope of life. They fell to fishing again, and had a good catch, and filled their boat with fish. For there are plenty of big fish, tusk and ling and codfish, to be caught with lines in the sea where they were fishing.

So they rowed ashore again. And when they had hauled the boat up high and dry on the shore, the good man said: 'Come, mate, let us share out the fish.' 'Nay, nay,' said the other, 'I will leave the sharing out to you, and the choice too, but I won't take any more than the third I bargained for.'

The Stranger's Tumble.—There were a good many people down on the shore, both men and women, and not a few poor folk, who had gone down to see the boats come in. And when the good-man had taken all the fish out of his boat, and laid them in three glittering heaps on the shore, he called the man in the rough coat, who had been busy with the boat all the while, to take his share. But he gave all his share away to the poor folks who were standing by, and saying good day to the fisherman, turned to go.

As he went away he had to climb up a steep path in the low cliff, that was close behind the narrow strip of shore, on which the boats and lines and other fishing-gear of the boatmen used to lie.

At the top of the cliff were a number of women sitting. They were talking together, and looking out for their husbands' and brothers' boats coming home from the fishing-banks.

The path was slippery, for it had been raining. And as the man in the rough coat



THE EARL OF ORKNEY AND THE FISHERMEN'S WIVES.

came up the path, his foot slipped, and he had a fall.

The Earl's Rebuke.—One of the women saw him tumble and she burst out laughing,

and when she laughed the other women began to laugh, too.

The man picked himself up and came up the path, without slipping again, and when he got to the top, he stopped and sang this verse—

The lady laughs to see me fall,
 She would not laugh if she knew all—
 When he is hauling up the boat,
 Few know the earl in his rough sea-coat.

Then off he went. They did not understand the lines at first, but ere long it was found out that the man in the rough coat was the good earl himself.

And I have no doubt the woman who laughed first was a little bit ashamed of her rudeness. And it got to be a saying among the people, when a man judged a stranger by his clothes or look, without knowing more about him—‘Ah, you had better take care what you are saying, for remember—it is not everyone that knows the earl in his fishing-coat!’

ter'-rib-ly	fright'-en-ed	cur'-rent	drown'-ed
qui'-et-ly	skil'-ful	cod'-fish	haul'-ed
bar'-gain-ed	glit'-ter-ing	steep	cliff
climb	gear	re-buke'	broth'-er
slip'-per-y	slip'-ped	laugh'-ing	burst
slip'-ping	rude'-ness	a-shame'-d	know'-ing

LESSON 43.

The Story of King Lear.—Most of the stories you have read in this book tell of Englishmen, or of men from Norway or Denmark who came to live in England and became Englishmen.

But many of us who are Scots, or Welsh, or Irish, would like to hear some tale of our forefathers, too. There is no lack of these, and I will set down here as many as there is room for.

First comes a story, which was written down by a Welsh clergyman more than six hundred years ago, for a son of the King of England to read.

Once upon a time there was a king in Britain whose name was Lear. He had three daughters whom he dearly loved, but he loved Cordelia, the youngest, best of all. He was getting old and less able to rule well; he, therefore, bethought him of sharing his kingdom among his children. But first he would try how far they were worthy of his trust and love.

Lear tests his Daughters' Love.—On the next great feast-day King Lear sent for his

daughters. And they came before him as he sat on his throne in the midst of his nobles.

Then he asked the eldest: 'How much do you love me?' 'More than myself,' she answered. And Lear was well pleased with her answer, and gave her a third part of his kingdom.

Then he turned to his second daughter, saying: 'And how much do you love me?' And she said: 'I love you more than everything else in the whole world.' And Lear believed her fair words, and gave her likewise a third part of his kingdom.

Lear disinherits Cordelia.—But, when it came to her turn, Cordelia, who really loved her father, could not bring herself to flatter him with fair words, as her sisters had done. Moreover, she knew that they had not meant what they had said, and she was sorry to see her father deceived. She was also minded to try his love for her. So when the old king turned to her and asked her how she loved him, she answered: 'I love you as I ought, father. I will say no more than that!'

But Lear was angry that she spoke so plainly, and said: 'Hitherto, I have loved you more than your sisters, but I can see very well that you do not love me as they do. You shall have no share in my kingdom.' Then he

parted the rest of the kingdom, which he had meant for Cordelia, between her two sisters.

Cordelia finds a good Husband.—The two rich sisters soon found husbands, and ruled as queens under their father, while Cordelia lived unmarried in disgrace.

But ere long the King of France, who knew Cordelia's worth, heard what had happened, and he sent to ask Lear to give him his youngest daughter to wife.

King Lear sent back word to him, saying: 'I will gladly let you marry Cordelia, but she will be a penniless bride, for I have shared between her sisters all that I had.'

The French king answered, 'I have land and gold of my own for both of us; I want no more from you than your daughter's hand.' So Cordelia married the French king, and went to live in France with him. They were happy together, but it grieved her heart to think how deeply her father had misunderstood her and doubted her love.

Nor'-way	Den'-mark	dis-in-her'-it	Scots
Welsh	Irish	fore'-fath-ers	writ'-ten
Brit'-ain	daugh'-ters	be-thought'	worth'-y
an'-swer-ed	throne	re'-al-ly	flat'-ter
de-ceive'-d	hith'-er-to	meant	pen'-ni-less
grieve'-d	doubt'-ed	mis'-un-der-stood	mar'-ri-ed

LESSON 44.

The Ungrateful Daughters.—Soon after Cordelia had left England, her two elder sisters, who were cruel and greedy women, would not let their father rule with them any longer.

They killed or drove away those who tried to defend him, for he was old and blind and helpless, and could not hold his own against them. They took away his crown and royal state, and turned him out of his palace. The poor king was forced to give up all he had to his ungrateful daughters. Nay, they even begrudged the cost of keeping him and the few old servants who waited on him.

Lear was almost heart-broken at his daughters' unkindness, and saw at last—now that it was too late—how ill he had done to trust to fair words. For some time he wandered about like a homeless beggar, over the land he had so long ruled. And few dared to give him and one faithful servant food or shelter, for fear of the anger of the wicked queens.

Cordelia's True Love.—In despair Lear made up his mind to try whether Cordelia would have mercy on him, though he was not

136 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

at all sure that she would forget his former harshness to her.



LEAR ON HIS WANDERINGS.

So he took ship for France, but when he landed, he was afraid to go straight to the city where his daughter lived, for he had been so

cruelly used that he mistrusted everyone. He therefore sent his old servant to her, bidding him tell the Queen of France that her father was come to her land in great distress, hungry, ill-clad, and forsaken.

Cordelia, who had heard nothing of her sisters' cruelty, wept bitterly to hear of her father's sorrows. She at once sent him food and money and royal raiment, and men to wait upon him, and bade him tell her when he would be ready to see her. And on the day he named, she and her husband the King of France, went out to meet him with a great company of soldiers and followers in gay dresses, all to do Lear honour. And they led him to their palace in great state, and gave him the rule of their kingdom, till he should be able to win back his own. Then they sent through France to gather a great army.

un-grate'-ful	for-sak'-en	hon'-our	straight
pal'-ace	be-grud'-ged	ser'-vant	beg'-gar
cru'-el-ly	mis-trust'-ed	dis-tress'	cru'-el-ty
rai'-ment	pal'-ace	roy'-al	ill-clad

LESSON 45.

Lear regains his Kingdom.—When all was ready, Lear and Cordelia and the King of France crossed over to Britain with a mighty host. The ungrateful daughters and their husbands fought against them, but they were soon defeated and slain, to the joy of all that heard of it.

So, by help of his true daughter, Cordelia, King Lear won back his kingdom, and ruled it well to his death-day, and when he died Cordelia became queen after him.

Thus, as is often shown, a good heart was proved better than a fair tongue. It is out of this story that Shakespeare made the beautiful play called ‘King Lear.’ But in the play, the story does not end quite in the same way as the Welshman wrote it, and as I have told it here for you. And when you can read Shakespeare’s play, I think you will like his way the best, though it is more sad than this one.

Old Welsh Proverbs.—The old Welsh had many proverbs and saws—that is, wise sayings that set forth a deal of homely wisdom in a few words. And here are some of the best:—

- A babbler can never keep a friend.
- A candle will not keep out the cold.
- A faint heart will not fend off Death.
- A kind heart is better than a fair face.
- A liar must always be talking.
- A stranger in a strange land needs Wisdom most of all things.
- Bad and good will never agree.
- Bad men are never content.
- Bloodshed brings on Bloodshed.
- Boasting makes a bad deed worse.
- Death is better than Disgrace.
- Downright 'No' is better than deceitful 'Yes.'
- Fair weather follows rain.
- Fly the fellowship of fools.
- Good-luck is the best of comrades.
- Good things will always find seekers.
- Good wits will win Honour.
- Great talkers are poor workers.
- Half-learnt is not learnt at all.
- He who takes a wolf by the throat, without a staff in his hand, must have a stout heart under his cloak.
- Idle folks should at least take the trouble to be polite.
- If a man be free and healthy why should he murmur?
- If the tongue told all the heart knows, none could be neighbours long.
- It takes a wise man to keep a secret.
- Mother-wit is better than Learning, but without Learning Mother-wit does not carry a man far.
- Nothing makes a man so ugly as bad manners.
- No good was ever got from over-sleeping.
- Oft seen is little looked to.
- Only fools break faith.
- Sin is a sore burden.

140 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

Still waters run deep.

Sure, Strong, and Silent are safe to get on.

The evil a man does lives after him.

The hearth of the liar shall be left bare.

We cannot all get what we want.

Wisdom is the best lantern to walk by.

And now as you have had a Welsh tale and Welsh proverbs to read, you shall hear some Irish tales of ancient days.

an'-ci-ent	daugh'-ters	hus'-band	tongue
Welsh'-man	pro'-verb	wis'-dom	bab'-bler
dis-grace'	de-cit'-ful	com'-rades	cloak
po-lite'	se'-cret	bur'-den	lant'-ern
mur'-mur	hearth	talk'-er	troub'-le

LESSON 46.

The Boyhood of Cu-culain.—In the old Irish books there is told the life and feats of a famous champion who lived long ago, but whose name is still kept in mind in Ireland. His name was *Cu-culain*. And you shall hear how he came by this name.

When he was yet a boy, living with his father and mother, he heard tell of a famous school at which lads were trained to be warriors. It was kept at the place where the King of Ireland, his mother's brother, lived ;

and the king used to take much pleasure in watching the lads at their games and training.

The little boy wished much to go and be trained with the others, but though he was tall and big and strong for his age, he was not so old as the rest of the lads there. And when he asked his mother if he might go and join them, she told him she was afraid he was too young yet. 'I do not want to wait longer, mother,' answered he, 'so pray, tell me which is the way there.'

'The place lies a good way off, and there is the great mountain you see yonder between us and it.'

'I will find my way there,' said he. So his mother let him go. And he set off, taking his playthings with him. He took his little silver ball and his *hurl*, or curved stick mounted with brass for striking the ball, and his little wooden shield and spear and dart. And he set off early in the morning. And as he went along, he amused himself striking his ball forward, and driving it before him with his hurl, and he would cast his dart and his spear and run quickly forward and catch them as they fell, before they touched the ground. And so he ran along playing till he came to the place where he wished to be.

The Quarrel on the Play-ground.—There was a large play-ground in a meadow with raised turf bank all round it, on which folks could sit and watch the lads at play. And when the boy came there, the lads were out playing football in this play-ground.

There were two sides or parties, and each *side* was trying to get the ball through the goal opposite. The boy ran into the midst of them, and got to the ball, and kept it close in front of him, driving it along with his feet so fast, and in such a clever way, that those of the party in front of him could not get it from him, till he had got it through the goal.

When they saw how well he played they wondered at his skill, and the king's son, his cousin, was angry that a stranger should have joined their game and beaten his side, without asking leave to play with them. And he called to his play-mates to set upon the stranger, and they did so. But when they cast their hurls at him, he warded them off with his hurl, and when they threw their balls at him he caught them in his hands, and when they hurled their wooden spears at him, he fended them off with his little wooden shield.

And he grew angry, too, at their all setting upon him, and rushed among them and threw

down everyone he caught hold of, till they ran away from him in fear. And he followed five of the biggest of them and chased them out of the play-ground, and they ran till they came to a big tree, where the king and one of his captains were sitting in the shade playing at a game of drafts.

feats	fa'-mous	cham'-pi-on	clev'-er
moth'-er	war'-ri-or	a-fraid'	an'-swer-ed
yond'-er	wood'-en	shield	for'-ward
mead'-ow	goal	op'-po-site	won'-der-ed
cous'-in	hurl	fend'-ed	big'-gest

LESSON 47.

The Boy meets his Mother's Brother.—The lads thought he would be afraid to follow them, but he did not stop, and ran so fast that he nearly overtook them. And in their haste they came to where the king sat, and leaped over the draft-board that was on the ground between him and the man he was playing with, and made off towards the king's house.

The boy followed them, but as he was jumping after them the king caught him in

his arms and held him, and said: 'My little lad, you are playing a rough game with the other boys.'

'It is their fault,' answered he, 'since they did not use me as they ought to have done, for it is right to be kindly behaved to a stranger.'

'Who are you, lad?' asked the king.

'I am your sister's son, and I thought I should have been better treated here,' said the boy.

'But, little son, do you not know that when a strange lad comes here, he ought to ask leave to play with the rest and beg them to treat him well?'

'I did not know that,' said the boy, 'or I would have taken more care.'

By this time a number of the lads had come up to where the king and his nephew were, and the king turned to them and said: 'Will you take this boy under your care and treat him well?' 'We will!' they answered. So the king let the boy go free out of his hands.

How the Quarrel was ended.—But as soon as he was free, he ran among the lads who had answered the king, and caught hold of them one after another and threw them down.

And not one of them was strong enough to stand against him.

The king was surprised to see this, and he called out to the boy to stop still, and let the others alone. 'What more do you want, lad?' said he.

And the boy said: 'I cannot leave them alone till they ask me to take them under my care and treat them well, as I have asked them.'

'Good!' said the king, 'that is fair.' And the lads were glad enough to do as the boy wished, for they were fairly frightened at his strength and boldness. And the king took him to live with him and be trained with the other lads in all the feats that they learned, to fit them to be champions and soldiers when they grew up. But of all the lads there was none that was his match, either at hurling, or golf, or football or wrestling, or at running, though he was the youngest there.

The Boy is asked to a Feast.—Not long after this there came to the king's house a man named Culan. He was a skilful smith and could forge good swords, and knives, and spear heads. And the helmets and armour that he wrought were strong and well made. And there was no kind of metal-work used

in those days, that he could not turn out better than anyone else.

He came to ask the king to come to a feast at his house: 'But I must ask you, sir,' he said, 'not to bring a large company with you, for I am not a rich man with lands or cattle, but have only the profit of my hands, and hammer, and tongs, and anvil, to keep me, so that I cannot entertain all your followers.'

'Very well,' answered the king, 'I will come, and I will not bring many men with me.'

In the afternoon the king went forth with a few of his men to go to the smith's house, and as he crossed the play-ground the lads were at their sports. He could see that his sister's son was by far the strongest and most skilful among them, and he turned to one of them that were with him and said: 'It would be a good thing for Ireland if this boy were as good a soldier as he is at boys' games.'

'I think, sir,' answered the warrior, 'that he will not be found wanting when he comes to be tried, seeing how skilful and strong he is now.'

Then the king called to his nephew, and asked him if he would come with him to the feast at the smith's. 'I cannot go, sir, till the

games are over,' said the boy, 'but then I will come after you.' And the king agreed that he should follow them when the games were done.

draft'-board	fault	be-have'-d	an-oth'-er
ought	sur-prise'-d	fright'-en-ed	war'-ri-or
cham'-pi-on	hurl'-ing	golf	wrest'-ling
skil'-ful	forge	knives	helm'-et
arm'-our	wrought	met'-al	com'-pan-y
prof'-it	tongs	an'-vil	en'-ter-tain
caught	treat	rough	neph'-ew

LESSON 48.

The Boy and the Watch-Dog.—Later in the afternoon when the games were over and the other lads went home, the boy took his hurl and his ball and ran off to the smith's house.

When he got there, he found a great fierce-looking watch-dog standing near the gate of the yard. And when it saw him coming up to the gate, it began to bark loudly, so that everyone in the smith's house heard the noise.

'Did you tell anyone to follow you, sir?' said the smith. 'No!' said the king, but with

that he remembered that his nephew had promised to come after him, and he shouted to his men to run to the gate at once, and save



CU-CULAIN KILLING THE WOLF-HOUND.

the lad. For he knew how big and fierce the dog was, and he was afraid it would have torn the lad to pieces.

They ran out in great haste, but before they reached the gate, they saw the boy standing inside the yard and the big dog stretched out dead at his feet. One of them caught the lad up on his arm and set him on his shoulder, and carried him into the house up to where the king sat at meat with the smith.

How the Boy got his Name.—The king was glad to see him safe, and the smith bade him welcome: ‘But though I am glad to see you,’ he said, ‘I have had to pay too dearly for the pleasure, for this dog of mine was so big and brave that he not only guarded my house and yard, but no wolves or thieves dared to come and rob any of my neighbours’ folds for fear of him. And what am I to do without him?’

‘Never mind the dog’s death,’ answered the little fellow, ‘for if there is in Ireland a puppy of the same breed, I will get him for you. And till the puppy is big enough to be useful to you, I will be your watch-dog myself.’

The king and the smith were pleased with his answer. And a wise man who was with the king said that he should be called *Cuculain*, which means in Irish *Culan’s Hound*, from that day forth. And he said, too, that

150 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

he thought that that name would be a famous one, as long as Irish was spoken. And it became so, because of the great deeds Cu-culain did in defending his country when he was grown up. And that is how the hero Cu-culain came by his strange name.

aft'-er-noon	fierce	re-mem'-ber-ed	a-fraid'
stretch'-ed	shoul'-der	wel'-come	pleas'-ure
guard'-ed	wolves	thieves	neigh'-bour
pup'-py	de-fend'-ing	thought	he'-ro

LESSON 49.

The Poet Ossian and his Son.—The Irish and Scots had much to tell about another chief and champion, who lived in the heathen days, whose name was Finn, and of the warriors he led, who were called *Feens*.

They were hunters as well as soldiers, and Finn's black hound, *Bran*, who used to pull down the great elks and the swift red deer, and stop the wild boar, was as well known as any of them.

Finn had a son named Ossian, who was the father of Oscar. Ossian was the poet of the Feens, and in the old stories he is said to have

outlived the rest of the Feens, and to have told S. Patrick when he came to Ireland long afterwards, all he could remember about them.

One of his saddest tales was of the last battle of the Feens in which his dear son Oscar fell. Oscar led the Feens when his grandfather was away, for though he was young, he was counted their most skilful soldier.

Oscar's Last Battle.—The King of Ireland was angry with the Feens because he thought they took too much upon themselves. And at last on a time when Finn was away, he gathered his army and fought against them. When the battle was joined and many men had fallen on both sides, Oscar and the King of Ireland came face to face and knew each other.

The king had a golden helmet on his head, and was riding a beautiful white horse. And Oscar was easy to know by his fair face, and by the banner borne behind him, which had upon it a branch of rowan-tree laden with red berries. The king cast his sharp spear at Oscar, and it struck him in the body and gave him a dreadful wound. But Oscar's keen spear struck the king full on the fore-

head, and he fell dead from his white steed, and his golden helmet rolled in the dust.

Again Oscar took aim and cast a spear, and it struck the king's son and slew him. And when the king's captains raised the king's helmet on a staff or pillar, that his men might see it and not know his death, and so fight on, Oscar cast a great stone at it, and broke it and hurled it in pieces to the ground. Then the king's men fled, for they had no leader, and the Feens won the day.

Ossian finds his Son dying.—Though the Feens won the day, they had lost many of their best and bravest, and of those alive there was scarce one but was wounded in more than one place.

As for Oscar, the hurt he got from the king's spear was deadly, and when he had hurled the great stone his strength gave way, and he sank to the ground faint with pain and the loss of blood. And news was brought to Ossian that his son was dying. And he hastened to him, and this is how he told what he saw:—

‘I found my son Oscar, lying on his left side. His shield lay close to him and his right hand was upon the hilt of his sword. The blood from his wound was pouring

through his broken armour when I saw him.
I set my spear down, and struck my hands



OSSIAN AND HIS SON OSCAR.

together and cried out: "What shall I do if
my dear son dies?"

'Oscar looked up at me, and it was pain

enough and more than I could bear for me to see him lying there. He stretched out both his arms to me and tried to raise himself, but he was too weak. I took his hand and sat down by his left side. Then Oscar said: "I thank the gods that thou art safe, father." I could not answer him, for my voice failed me by reason of my grief. And from that hour there was little joy left me in this world.'

Irish	Scots	chief	cham'-pi-on
heath'-en	war'-ri-or	elks	boar
gath'-er-ed	grand'-fath-er	helm'-et	borne
row'-an	ber'-ries	dread'-ful	wound
fore'-head	steed	capt'-ains	pill'-ar
hurl'-ed	shield	arm'-our	grief

LESSON 50.

Oscar's Wounds.—'And we bound our spear-shafts together to make a litter, and lifted Oscar upon it, and bore him out of the field to a little knoll where the grass was soft and green, and there they laid him down. And I took off his helmet and his coat of mail and washed the blood from his body. And there was not a palm's breadth of his skin, from his throat to the sole of his foot, that was without a

wound, but there was no scar on his face. And, as he lay on the knoll, there came one of the Feens that was skilled in healing to look at his wounds, and see whether he could heal them. And he said: "Thou wast in as evil plight, O Oscar, when we fought at Howth and Dundalk, and it was my hand that healed thee and made thee whole."

'But Oscar answered him: "Though thou should heal every other wound that is on me, I can never be healed of that deep wound on my right side, which the spear of the King of Ireland made; but I know that he is dead of the wound of my spear."

'And it was as he said, there was no doctor on earth could heal him of his grievous wound. That night we slept not, for we were busy burying the dead that lay on the field, and tending the wounded. And I watched beside Oscar till the dawn of day, and he lay speechless in a swoon.

The Death of Oscar.—'And when the sun was high in the heaven, there was a noise of shouting and a clashing of arms on the shore, to the north of the battlefield. And Oscar awoke and heard the shouts and said: "These are the ships of my grandfather that we looked for."

‘And soon we saw Finn coming across the plain, and we greeted him, but he did not answer us, nor speak till he came where Oscar lay. Oscar turned his face towards him and said: “Now I can die in peace, for I have seen thee!”

‘And Finn answered him: “Sad is the meeting between us, thou son of my good son! I am left desolate indeed without thee, and the Feens that are dead here! Pity it is that it was not I that fell in the battle, and thou left to be the head of the Feens.”

‘Then Oscar held out his arms to his grandfather for a moment, but soon they fell again to his side, and his eyes closed and he breathed his last breath.

Ossian’s Grief for his Son.—‘And when Oscar was dead, there was a sad wail of grief raised over him by the warriors, and the women shrieked aloud, and the dogs howled and whined at their cries. But I could not utter a sound for sorrow, and as for Finn my father, he turned away from us in silence, and the tears streamed from his eyelids.

‘In all his life Finn never wept for the death of any creature, neither father, nor son, nor brother, save for his faithful hound, Bran, and for his grandson, Oscar. And from that day

forth Finn was never merry by day nor could he sleep peacefully by night. For he would ever be thinking mournfully over Oscar's death. And never woman grieved more over her only son, nor man for his own brother, than we did over Oscar as we bore him to his grave.'

'Twas Oscar's death that wrung my heart,
O'er all the land men felt the smart.
Where in his days could one have seen
A heart so brave, a sword so keen?
Oscar that thought of nought but good—
Oscar of kind and courteous mood—
Oscar with lips that never lied,
Nor uttered boast or word of pride;
He's gone! My son is dead! And they
That loved us both have passed away,
Like sparks that fly from blazing grass,
Like drops that down the torrent pass,
Like dust that's o'er the hillside blown,
They've passed away, and I'm alone.

And in Ireland and Scotland where men never forgot the tales of the Feens, it is still said of a man left alone and forlorn that he is like 'Ossian after the Feens.'

knoll	palm	breadth	griev'-ous
bury'-ing	wrung	swoon	greet'-ed
breath'-ed	shriek'-ed	whine'-d	sil'-ence
peace'-ful-ly	mourn'-ful-ly	grieve'-d	des'-o-late

LESSON 51.

How St. Patrick became a Slave.—The next stories you shall hear are not of chiefs or champions, but are taken from the life of St. Patrick, who brought the Irish to the Christian faith. Hence he is often called ‘The Apostle of Ireland,’ and Irishmen have always honoured him. It is in his memory that they wear a sprig of shamrock on the 17th of March, which is the day of his birth and also of his death.

Patrick was born in Scotland; his father was a clergyman, and well to do. The boy was brought up on a little farm in the country. When he was sixteen years old there came a fleet of Irish pirates to the place. These rovers landed and began plundering, as was their custom. When they went back to their ships with the goods they had stolen, they took with them a number of women and children, whom they meant to sell as slaves. Among these were Patrick and some of his kinsfolk.

St. Patrick comes Home.—The poor lad was carried over-sea, and sold to a nobleman in the north of Ireland. He set Patrick

to keep his sheep, and he was at this work for six years.

A shepherd has a lonely life and plenty of time for thinking; and as Patrick lay out on the hills by night, watching his flock, his mind was never idle. His thoughts were often of his father and mother, and of his home, and of how he might escape from his master and get back to them.

But his chief thought was about the heathen Irish. He saw that they were kindly people and willing to learn, but that they often did foolish and cruel things, because they had never had anyone to teach them a better way of life. And this was a sorrow to him.

At last, after long and weary waiting, Patrick was able to slip off from his master without being seen, and to make his way to the sea-shore. Here he happened to find a ship ready to sail, and the sailors let him come on board with them. And after some hardship and danger—for their food ran short, and they were all nearly starved—he got back safe to his home and his kinsfolk.

St. Patrick goes back to Ireland.—Now that he was free and well-off once more, Patrick did not forget the needs of the Irish. He set to work at once to learn from the

wisest and best men he could find, and became a clergyman.

Seven years after he left Ireland a runaway slave, he went back again as a teacher in a ship of his own, with a few friends who were willing to help him. There was a herdsman keeping cattle near the shore when Patrick's ship came in, and when he saw the strangers he thought they must be pirates. So he left his herd and ran swiftly up to the house of his master, who was lord of that part of the land, and told him to make ready to defend himself.

The nobleman took his sword and spear and shield, and gathered his servants and armed them, and came down to the shore to drive away the new-comers. He was much astonished when he found out who they were, and what their errand was, and welcomed them kindly to his house. So Patrick and his followers stayed awhile with him, and before they went away he had become a Christian.

cham'-pi-on	mem'-ory	sham'-rock	pi'-rates
cus'-tom	kins'-folk	es-cape'	hap'-pen-ed
run'-a-way	shield	serv'-ant	as-ton'-ish-ed
er'-rand	wel'-oom-ed	Christ'-ian	fol'-low-ers

Shamrock : A small plant, the leaves of which grow three on each stem, like clover-leaves.

LESSON 52.

St. Patrick's Work.—From this time forth for more than fifty years Patrick went on with the work he had set himself to do, going from place to place preaching and teaching. And ere he died, the greater part of the Irish had become Christians through his words.

But this was not brought about without toil and danger. More than once the heathen sought to kill the new teachers. For they did not understand what Patrick wanted, and did not like to give up their old worship of wells and stones, and trees and fairies. Nor did they, at first, like the new laws which were made by the wise men of Ireland at Patrick's advice, though they were more merciful and better than the old laws which they had before.

The Irish could not read the books Patrick brought with him, for they did not know the letters. The teachers, therefore, cut the alphabet on thin flat laths of wood, about a yard long and two inches broad, and gave these to the people so that they might learn to copy the letters.

How a Wise Man saved St. Patrick's Life.

At one place there was a heathen priest, who did not like the new faith. He told his fellow-countrymen, that these pieces of wood were magic swords, and the letters upon them charms and spells, by which the Christians were able to secretly kill anyone they disliked.

The people believed this man's story, and gathered together to slay Patrick and his friends.

But there was a wise man there who stood up and spoke to the mob, and showed them how foolish their fancy was, and saved the Christian teachers. And Patrick wrote a copy of the Book of Psalms with his own hand, and gave it to this wise man's son as a mark of his gratefulness. And the man who first wrote down this story, many years after, says that he himself had seen this very book.

St. Patrick and the Rich Man.—There was a heathen lord who lived in the north of Ireland, and he had much land. One day Patrick went to his house, and begged him to give him a little plot of land on a hill-top. For he wished to build a church there, and a little house for himself and his followers to live in.

The rich man would not give him the plot he asked for, but let him have another piece of land low down the hill, and there Patrick took up his abode for a time. Shortly after this the rich man fell ill and was like to die, but suddenly his sickness left him and he was well again.

He thought that Patrick, whom he took to be a *wizard*, must of his good-will have wrought this wonderful cure in return for the piece of land. So he made up his mind to please him, and sent him as a gift a large brass cauldron, big enough to hold twenty-seven gallons.

preach'-ing	fan'-oy	wor'-ship	fair'-ies
ad-vice'	mer'-ci-ful	al'-pha-bet	laths
broad	heath'-en	mag'-ic	se'-cret-ly
fool'-ish	Psalms	grate'-ful-ness	beg'-ged
sud'-den-ly	wrought	cauld'-ron	gall'-ons

Wizard: In old times people believed that some folks had the power to bring disease or ill-luck upon them and foretell their future. These men they called wizards, which meant 'wise men.'

LESSON 53.

St. Patrick's Patience.—The cauldron the rich man gave him was useful to Patrick,

who had a big household of clergymen and pupils and servants to feed, for he could boil a whole sheep at once in it, as it was then the custom to do. So he took the gift gladly, saying to them that brought it: 'I thank your master.'

But the rich man had looked for some gift or promise from Patrick, and he was angry. So he sent his servants to fetch back the cauldron. Patrick smiled and gave it back saying: 'I thank your master.'

When the rich man heard that Patrick had spoken no angry word he was sorry for his rudeness, and he took the cauldron back to Patrick himself, saying: 'Keep it for ever, and with it I give you the land I refused you before. Come, let us go and measure it out at once.' So they went up the hill together.

St. Patrick and the Fawn.—When they came to the hill-top and were walking round the plot, they found a roe-deer lying with her little fawn asleep in the thick grass. The doe leapt up in a fright and sprang off, but the fawn could not go so fast, and one of the rich man's servants caught it, and was about to kill it.

But Patrick would not have it harmed, and went to it and took it up carefully in

his arms, and carried it down the hill to a field below. And as he went, the mother,



ST. PATRICK AND THE FAWN.

who had been watching a little way off, came and followed close behind him like a pet lamb; and in the field he set the fawn

gently down and left them in safety together. On the hill-top Patrick built a stone church, and the altar of it still stands on the spot, where the doe and her fawn were found in the grass, the day the hill was given to Patrick.

The church there is the most famous of all that Patrick built, and it is the chief church of Ireland to this day. Patrick was on the road to visit this church, when he died before he reached it, so he is not buried there, but at Downpatrick, which is called after him.

use'-ful	pu'-pil	prom'-ise	cauld'-ron
meas'-ure	ly'-ing	fawn	fa'-mous
bur'-i-ed	alt'-ar	doe	roe-deer

Cauldron: A large metal pot which was hung over the fire and used for cooking in.

LESSON 54.

Columba and his Island.—There was another missionary afterwards buried at Down by Patrick's side, who led a noble life also, and was long as famous in Scotland as Patrick in Ireland.

His name was Columba; he was the son of an Irish king, but he chose to become

a clergyman instead of being a soldier or a king himself. He was much looked up to by his fellow-countrymen, but he mixed himself in their quarrels somewhat too eagerly. And when he was forty years of age, he bethought him of trying to do more good abroad, than he had been able to do at home.

So with twelve trusty followers he took ship to Scotland, where men were still heathen, hoping to turn the people there to his own faith by his teaching. The king of the land to which he went received him well, and gave him a little island to live in. The island is now called *Iona*, and it is a beautiful place. The shore is strewn with pretty glittering pebbles and fine white sand, the grass is good and sweet, and the land is fruitful.

It is not so hilly as the islands that lie near it, so that it is better to live in, by reason of the stretch of land that can be tilled, for little grain will grow on the rocky sides of the other islands. But from *Iona* you can see the other islands, and it is a fair sight to see their grey mountains rising out of the clear blue sea.

Many people still go to visit *Iona*, partly because it is so beautifully placed like a quiet green meadow in the ocean, and partly because

they wish to see the place where Columba lived and died.

Columba's Character.—Columba built in Iona both churches and houses, and a stable, and a kiln for drying the rye and barley, so that he and his followers could live and till the land. And he made his own island his headquarters, but he often went about to the mainland and the other islands, preaching and teaching. And the heathen people listened to his words, and took the new faith that he taught them, for they felt that it was better than their own.

Columba was a tall, kingly man, with a stern face which sometimes frightened those who saw him for the first time. But those who knew him better soon grew fond of him, because of his kindly ways and warm heart. He had a sweet voice, and it was so powerful, that he could make his words heard clearly more than half a mile away, if he chose to raise it.

He was a good doctor, and healed many sick folks by his skill in medicine. He wrote and copied many books, and could make verses, for he loved poetry. Some of the hymns he made are still known. He was never idle; and laziness and lies and silly talk

he could not bear. He was stern to those who did wrong till they repented of their wickedness, but he was always ready to help the sick and friendless, and loved good men, and was kind to animals.

miss'-ion-ary	an'-i-mals	quar'-rels	a-broad'
re'-ceive'-d	peb'-bles	glit'-ter-ing	fruit'-ful
is'-land	rea'-son	mead'-ow	la'-zi-ness
kiln	bar'-ley	rye	head-quart'-ers
stern	med'-i-cine	hymns	po'-et-ry
fright'-en-ed	pow'-er-ful	friend'-less	wrong

LESSON 55.

Columba and the Birds and Beasts.—Of his kindness to animals, the man who wrote a Life of Columba only a short time after his death, often speaks. And he tells how Columba knew the ways of beasts and birds, and seemed to understand them better than anyone else.

Once, he says, Columba told one of his servants to be sure and take good care of a poor crane, that sank upon the shore of the island wearied and worn-out by its long flight. And he bade him feed it and care for it three

days, and then let it go that it might fly back to its pleasant home in Ireland.

Now, as always happens if one loves dumb beasts and is kind to them, the beasts know it and grow to love one in return. And it was seen that the dumb beasts loved Columba.

Columba's Death.—When Columba was grown old and feeble and nigh to death, he was out walking with a servant one morning, and feeling tired he sat down to rest for a while.

There was grazing close by a white horse, a faithful and willing beast, that used to carry the kegs of milk up from the cowbyre in the fields to the house. And when the horse saw the old man sitting down with a look of pain on his face, he came quietly up and put his head on his lap, weeping like a man; and the tears ran down his face and wetted Columba's coat.

Columba's servant who was with him wished to drive the horse away, but Columba would not let him, and said: 'Let him alone, the poor beast loves me and weeps over me, for he knows I am near my end. You are a man with a mind that can reason and draw conclusions, and you did not know that I was soon to die till I told you, but this dumb

creature knows.' And he blessed the horse as it turned away. And sure enough within



ST. COLUMBA AND THE WHITE HORSE.

a day or two Columba died, on the 9th of June, aged seventy-seven.

After his death his bones were laid in

172 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

Iona, but when the heathen Danes came, they were taken over to Ireland for greater safety—for the relics of such men as Columba were held in much reverence by all Christians—and buried at Down, where they lie now by the side of St. Patrick's. But though Columba's body does not rest in Iona, the island grew so famous, that more than one hundred kings and princes were buried there; among them are Mac-beth, of whose life Shakespeare made a noble play, and Have-lock, of whom you have read the story in this little book.

an'-i-mals	crane	wear'-ied	al'-ways
dumb	fee'-ble	graz'-ing	kegs
cow'-byre	qui'-et-ly	wet'-ted	con-clu'-sion
rel'-ics	rev'-er-ence	bur'-ied	Ire'-land

Cowbyre : Cowshed.

Relics : Remains.

LESSON 56.

The Prince and the Poor Scholar.—The next story is about another good Irishman. One fine morning a certain Irish prince rode forth with a train of horsemen after him, on his way to his sister's house. And as they

rode, they came up with a young scholar who was trudging merrily along the rough road, barefooted, with a wooden keg full of milk on his back. He heard the tramp of their horses behind him, and sprang out of the road to make way for them. But as he leapt aside he struck his foot against a stone and stumbled and fell. And in the fall the milk-keg was broken against a great sharp flint, and the milk that was in it was spilled.

The horsemen rode by without stopping, and the boy picked himself up with a rueful face indeed. But he had a brave heart, and he set off at once to run after them, with the broken keg dangling at his back, and the last drops of milk trickling out of it.

He ran so fast that he soon overtook them. Then he ran beside them, keeping up with them and looking at them as he ran, for they were finely dressed, and it was good to see their gay clothes and bright weapons, and to watch the fine horses striding along, and to gaze up at the kindly face of the young prince who rode foremost of the troop.

The spilt Milk paid for.—The young prince looked down at the poor lad running along so bravely, with his face now smiling at the horsemen, and now almost in tears as

he thought of the spilt milk and the broken keg. 'Cheer up, lad,' said he, for he had marked what had happened, 'I will make you



THE BROKEN MILK-KEG.

happy again, for I feel for the poor and unlucky. I will make good your loss, so do not grieve over it.'

But the lad answered : ‘ It is not without a cause that I look sad, sir, for where I live there are three scholars, sons of gentlemen, and three poor scholars, and I am one of the poor ones. And we wait upon the others, and every day one of us goes round to neighbours’ houses, and gets gifts of food for the others. And to-day it was my turn, and I had got this kegful of milk for our supper. And now it is spilt, and that is not all, for the keg is broken too, and it is one I borrowed, and we have no money to pay for it.’

Then the good-natured young prince gave him enough money to pay for the keg, and to buy good meals for them all for many a day. And what is more he did not forget the lad, but when he found out that he was an honest, truthful boy, that was steady to his book and got on in learning, he took care that he should not want. And when he heard that he had finished his studies and was made a clergyman, the prince sent for him to his court (for he was now become King of All Ireland), and took him for his chief friend and counsellor.

He turned out a wise and good man, and afterwards was chosen to be head of the household of pious folk at Iona, which

176 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

Columba had set up. And it is he that wrote the Life of Columba, and told about the old horse that grieved over him as you have read above.

cert'-ain	schol'-ar	trudg'-ing	bare-foot'-ed
wood'-en	leapt	stum'-ble-d	rue'-ful
dang'-ling	trick'-ling	clothes	weap'-ons
fore'-most	un-luck'-y	grieve	keg'-ful
bor'-row-ed	truth'-ful	fin'-ish-ed	stud'-ies
coun'-sell-or	chose'-n	grieve'-d	cler'-gy-man

LESSON 57.

Old English Proverbs.—Our English and Danish forefathers were as fond of saws and proverbs as the Welsh. Here are some that were in use many hundred years ago, and among them you will find several that are still in folks' mouths:—

- A burnt child dreads the fire.
- A good foster-child is better than a bad son.
- A man can only die once.
- A man is a man in his own house.
- A soft scythe is soon blunt.

A stout heart is worth more than a steel blade.
 A wary man is a wise man.
 All is not gold that glitters.
 An ill-spun web will always come out.
 An old tree may fall any day.
 Bare is back without brother behind it.
 Better be silent than speak out of season.
 Better one apple given away than two eaten.
 Better one-eyed than stone-blind, and better blind than
 buried.
 Be wise in time, it's all too late,
 When Death stands knocking at the gate !
 Brew sour and you will drink sour.
 Dear is bought the honey that is licked off the thorn.
 Do not praise the day till the sun is down.
 Early to bed and early to rise,
 Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
 Far from eye, far from heart.
 Forewarned is forearmed.
 Give and Give-back make the firmest friends.
 Good beginning makes good ending.
 Good Heed is better than great Haste.
 Grip is a good dog, but Holdfast a better.
 Hard words break no bones.
 He that will not when he may,
 When he will he shall have nay.
 He that calls out gets the dish.
 Health and Wealth won't always stay,
 Use them wisely while you may !
 I never found the tongue too slow.
 If you wait long enough you will have a fair wind
 Ill weeds grow apace.
 Ill-gotten is ever ill-spent.
 Let sleeping dogs lie.

178 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

Most folk think too much of money.
Never tell thy foe when thy foot aches.
No man but finds his match at last.
Old sin makes new Shame.
Seldom comes Loan laughing home.
The day has many eyes.
The fat pig's guilt is soon proved.
The foot knows best where the shoe pinches.
The worst friend a man can have is a Flatterer.
There grows no good apple on a sour stock.
Unlooked-for comes at last.

When need is highest,

Help is nighest.

What only two know is a secret, but what three know all
the world knows.

When the cup is fullest, bear it fairest (i.e. most steadily).

Wit and wisdom are the best of baggage.

Words get wings when they once slip the lips.

You cannot make an empty sack stand upright.

You may comb an ass and crop an ass, but you cannot
turn him into a riding-horse.

It has been said that the proverbs of a people show its thoughts and ways, better than anything else. So you must try and make out what you can about our Welsh and English forefathers from those given here. At all events, they are shrewd and full of good sense, and there are many folks in our day who might do much better than they do, if they kept them in mind and acted upon them.

What it is that makes a Nation strong and great.—When you come to read bigger books than this—Histories of England and Ireland and Scotland, and the Lives of Famous Men and Women that have lived in these Islands—you will find much that is worth knowing and bearing in mind. For this little book can only give a very small part of what is written about the deeds and beliefs of our forefathers. And I think that, next to knowing and talking with good men and women, which we are not always able to do, there is nothing more delightful than hearing and reading about them.

And this is always to be remembered, that the best and most noble men and women are not those who have the most money, or are called by the highest titles, or even those who lead large armies and rule broad kingdoms, but rather those who do all the good that it is in their power to do, whether they are rich or poor, great or small. For it is not the size of a country, nor the number of its people, nor the amount of gold and silver and other riches it has, that makes a nation great and powerful. But that nation is the greatest and strongest, which has the most men and

180 OLD STORIES FROM BRITISH HISTORY.

women and children in it with kind hearts and wise heads and healthy bodies.

Dan'-ish	fore'-fath-ers	pro'-verb	sev'-er-al
scythe	fore-warn'-ed	be-gin'-ning	aches
shrewd	writ'-ten	be-liefs'	re-mem'-ber-ed
ti'-tles	pow'-er-ful	de-light'-ful	wheth'-er

DAYS AND DATES.

January 6	. Christmas-tide or Yule-tide ends.	
February 3	. King Swain died . . .	1014
March 17	. Saint Patrick's Day . . .	
April 19	. . The good Archbishop (Alfege) died . . .	1012
May 9	. . Bede died . . .	942
June 9	. . Columba died . . .	597
July 18	. . King Edgar died . . .	975
August 20	. The good Earl (Rognwald) died .	1158
September 9	. King Anlaf died . . .	1000
October 26	. King Alfred died . . .	901
November 12	. King Canute died . . .	1035
December 24	. Christmas-tide or Yule-tide begins.	

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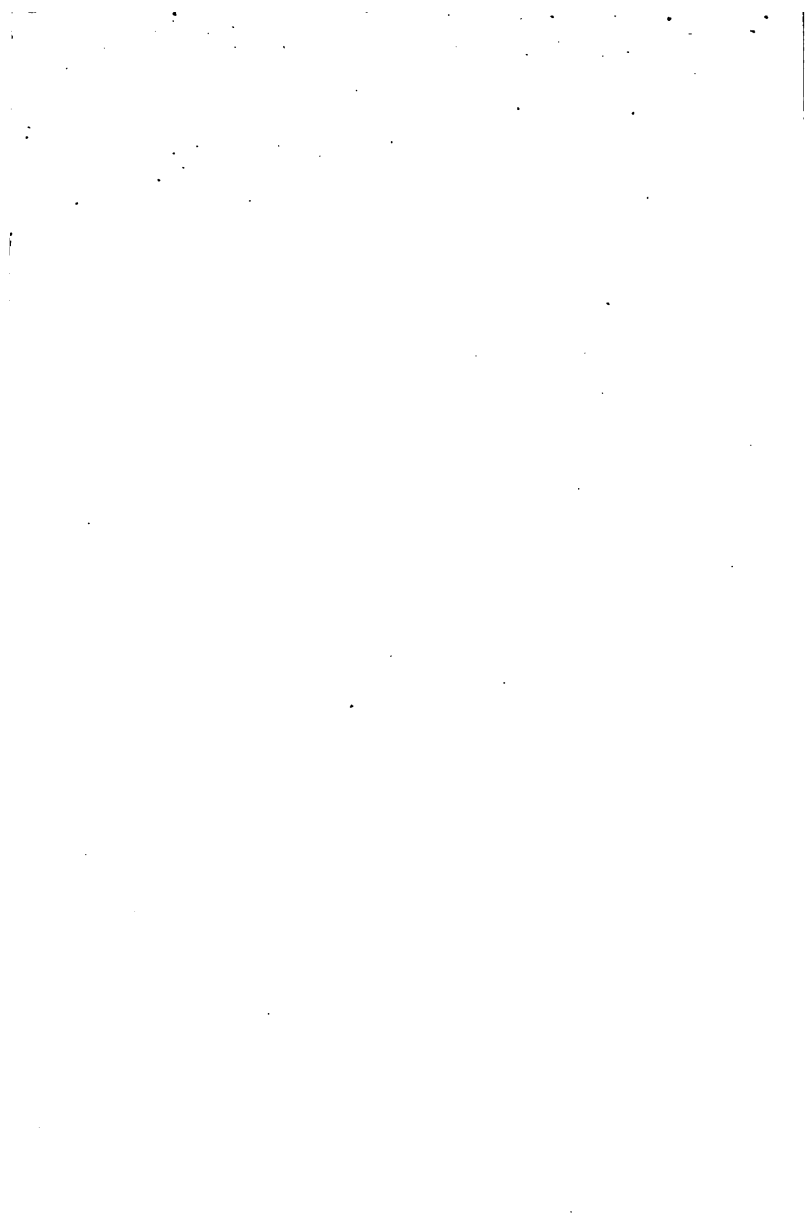
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